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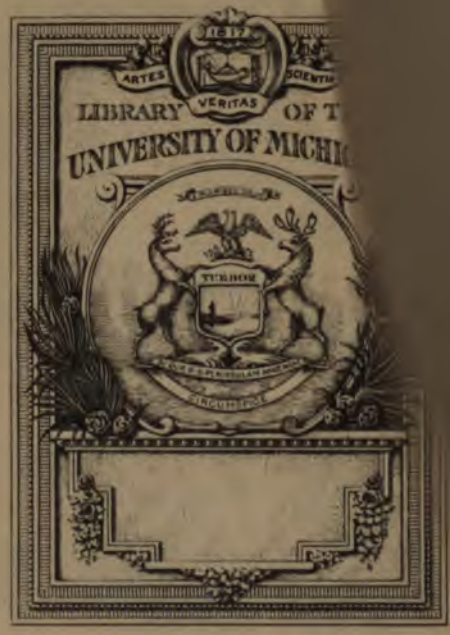
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THE

WORKS

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS,

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

CONTAINING,

I. A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS,

IN THREE PARTS.

II. FIVE DISCOURSES ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE.
II. PRESSING INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.
III. RUTH'S RESOLUTION.
IV. JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS.
V. THE EXCELLENCY OF JESUS CHRIST.

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A

TREATISE

CONCERNING

RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS:

IN

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

Concerning the Nature of the Affections, and their Importance in Religion.

PART II.

Shewing why there are no certain Signs that Religious Affections are gracious, or that they are not.

PART III.

Shewing what are distinguishing Signs of truly gracious and holy Affections.

Lev. ix. ult. and x. 1, 2.—And there came a fire out before the Lord—upon the altar;—which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces. And Nahab and Abihu—offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not: and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

Cant. ii. 12, 13.—The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Ver. 15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes which spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

PREFACE.

THERE is no question of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in, than this: *What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favour with God, and entitled to his eternal rewards?* Or, which comes to the same thing, *What is the nature of true religion, and wherein lie the distinguishing notes of that virtue which is acceptable in the sight of God?* But though it be of such importance, and though we have clear and abundant light in the word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point wherein professing Christians differ more one from another. It would be endless to reckon up the variety of opinions, in this point, that divide the Christian world; making manifest the truth of that declaration of our Saviour, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it.*

The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter with the utmost diligence and care, and all the exactness of search and inquiry of which I have been capable. It is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I first entered on the study of divinity. But as to the *success* of my inquiries, it must be left to the judgment of the reader of the following treatise.

I am sensible it is difficult to judge impartially of the subject of this discourse, in the midst of the dust and smoke of present controversy, about things of this nature. As it is more difficult to *write* impartially, so it is more difficult to *read* impartially. Many will probably be hurt, to find so much that appertains to religious affection here condemned; and perhaps indignation and contempt will be excited in others by finding so much justified and approved. And it may be, some will be ready to charge me with inconsistence with myself, in so much approving some things, and so much condemning others; as I have found that this has always been objected to me by some, ever since the beginning of our late controversies about religion. It is a difficult thing to be a hearty zealous friend of what has been *good* and glorious in the late extraordinary appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and, at the same time, to see the evil and pernicious tendency of what has been *bad*, and earnestly to oppose that. Yet, I am *humbly* but *fully* persuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, till we do so. There is indeed something very mysterious in it, that so much good, and so much bad, should be mixed together in the *church of God:* as it is a mysterious thing, and what has puzzled and amazed many a good

Christian, that there should be that which is so divine and precious, as the saving grace of God, dwelling in the same heart with so much corruption, hypocrisy, and iniquity, in *a particular saint*. Yet neither of these is more mysterious than real. And neither of them is a new thing. It is no new thing, that much false religion should prevail at a time of great revival; and that, at such a time, multitudes of hypocrites should spring up among true saints. It was so in that great reformation, and revival of religion, in Josiah's time, as appears by Jer. iii. 10, and iv. 3, 4; and also by the great apostacy there was in the land so soon after his reign. So it was in that great out-pouring of the Spirit upon the Jews, in the days of JOHN the BAPTIST, as appears by the great apostacy of that people, so soon after so general an awakening, and the temporary religious comforts and joys of many; John v. 35. *Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.* So it was in those great commotions among the multitude, occasioned by the preaching of Jesus Christ. *Of the many that were then called, but few were chosen*; of the multitude that were roused and affected by his preaching—and at one time or other appeared mightily engaged, full of admiration of Christ, and elevated with joy—but few were true disciples, that stood the shock of trials, and endured to the end. Many were like the *stony* or *thorny* ground; and but few, comparatively, like the *good* ground. Of the whole heap that was gathered, great part was chaff, that the wind afterwards drove away; and the heap of wheat that was left, was comparatively small, as appears abundantly by the history of the New Testament. So it was in that great out-pouring of the Spirit in the Apostles' days; as appears by Matth. xxiv. 10—13, Gal. iii. 1. and iv. 11, 15. Phil. ii. 21. and iii. 18, 19; the two epistles to the Corinthians, and many other parts of the New Testament. And so it was in the great *reformation* from Popery. It appears plainly to have been in the visible church of God, in times of great revivals as it is with the fruit trees in the spring; there are multitudes of blossoms, which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promising appearance of young fruits; but many of them are of short continuance; they soon fall off, and never come to maturity.

It is not, however, to be supposed, that it will *always* be so; for though there never will, in this world, be an entire purity, either in particular saints, by a perfect freedom from mixtures of corruption, or in the church of God, without any mixture of hypocrites with saints—or counterfeit religion and false appearances of grace with true religion and real holiness—yet, it is evident there will come a time of much greater purity in the church, than has been in ages past*. And one great reason of it will be, that at that time, God will give much greater light to his people, to distinguish between true religion and its counterfeits; Mal. iii. 3. *And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.* With ver. 18, which is a continuation of the prophecy of the same happy times. *Then shall ye re-*

* This appears plain by these texts of scripture, Is. lii. 1. Ezek. xliv. 6, 7, 9. Joel iii. 17. Zech. xiv. 21. Psal. lxix. 32, 35, 36. Is. xxxv. 8, 10, Chap. iv. 3, 4. Ezek. xx. 38. Psal. xxxvii. 9, 10, 11, 29.

turn, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ. It is plainly by this means, principally, that he has prevailed against all revivals of religion, since the first founding of the Christian church. By this he hurt the cause of Christianity, in and after the apostolic age, much more than by all the persecutions of both Jews and Heathens. The apostles, in all their epistles, shew themselves much more concerned at the former mischief, than the latter. By this, Satan prevailed against the reformation, begun by Luther, Zuinglius, &c. to put a stop to its progress, and bring it into disgrace, ten times more than by all the bloody and cruel persecutions of the church of Rome. By this, principally, has he prevailed against revivals of religion in our nation. By this he prevailed against New-England, to quench the love, and spoil the joy of her espousals, about a hundred years ago. And, I think, I have had opportunity enough to see plainly, that by this the devil has prevailed against the late great revival of religion in New-England, so happy and promising in its beginning. Here, most evidently, has been the main advantage Satan has had against us; by this he has foiled us. It is by this means that the daughter of Zion in this land now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances, with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in no wise able to arise; and this, so quickly after her late great joys and hopes: Lam. i. 17, *Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries shall be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.* I have seen the devil prevail the same way, against two great revivals of religion in this country. Satan goes on with mankind as he began with them. He prevailed against our first parents, cast them out of paradise, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent that beguiled Eve through his subtilty, by perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, hath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisiacal state of the church of God in New-England.

After religion has revived in the church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause are commonly most exposed, where they are least sensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears *openly* before them, in order to make head against that, and while they neglect carefully to look around, the devil comes behind them, and gives a fatal stab unseen; and he has opportunity to give a more home stroke, and to wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leisure, being obstructed by no resistance or guard.

And so it is likely ever to be in the church, whenever religion revives remarkably, till we have learned well to distinguish between true and false religion, between saving affections and experiences, and those ma-

nifold fair shews, and glistering appearances, by which they are counterfeited: the consequences of which, when they are not distinguished, are often inexpressibly dreadful. *By this means*, the devil gratifies himself, that multitudes should offer to God, under the notion of acceptable service, what is indeed above all things abominable to him. *By this means*, he deceives great multitudes about the state of their souls; making them think they are something, when they are nothing; and so eternally undoes them: and not only so, but establishes many in a strong confidence of their eminent holiness, who, in God's sight, are some of the vilest hypocrites. *By this means*, he many ways damps religion in the hearts of the saints, obscures and deforms it by corrupt mixtures, causes their religious affections wofully to degenerate, and sometimes, for a considerable time, to be like the *manna* that bred worms and stank; and dreadfully ensnares and confounds the minds of others, brings them into great difficulties and temptations, and entangles them in a wilderness out of which they can by no means extricate themselves. *By this means*, Satan mightily encourages the hearts of open enemies, strengthens their hands, fills them with weapons, and makes strong their fortresses; when at the same time, religion and the church of God lie exposed to them, as a city without walls. *By this means*, he brings it to pass, that men work wickedness under a notion of doing God service, and so sin without restraint, yea, with earnest forwardness and zeal, and with all their might. *By this means*, he brings in even the friends of religion, insensibly, to do the work of enemies, by destroying religion in a far more effectual manner than open enemies can do, under a notion of advancing it. *By this means*, the devil scatters the flock of Christ, and sets them one against another with great heat of spirit, under a notion of zeal for God; and religion, by degrees, degenerates into vain jangling. During the strife, Satan leads both parties far out of the right way, driving each to great extremes, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, according as he finds they are most inclined, or most easily moved and swayed, till the right path in the middle is almost wholly neglected. In the midst of this confusion, the devil has great opportunity to advance his own interest, to make it strong in ways innumerable, to get the government of all into his own hands, and to work his own will And by what is seen of the terrible consequences of this counterfeit, when not distinguished from true religion, God's people in general have their minds unsettled in religion, and know not where to set their foot, or what to think, and many are brought into doubts, whether there be any thing at all in religion; and heresy, infidelity, and atheism greatly prevail.

Therefore, it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavours, clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist. Till this be done, it may be expected that great revivals of religion will be but of short continuance; till this be done, there is but little good to be expected of all our warm debates, in conversation and from the press, not knowing clearly and distinctly what we ought to contend for.

My design is to contribute my mite, and use my best (however feeble) endeavours to this end, in the ensuing treatise; wherein it must be no-

ted, that it is somewhat diverse from the design of what I formerly published, which was to shew *The distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God*, including both his common and saving operations. What I aim at now, is to shew the nature and signs of the *gracious operations* of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all things whatsoever which are not of a saving nature. If I have succeeded in this my aim, in any tolerable measure, I hope it will tend to promote the interest of religion. And whether I have succeeded to bring any light to this subject or not, and however my attempt may be reproached, in these captious, censorious times, I hope in the mercy of a gracious and righteous God, for the acceptance of the sincerity of my endeavours; and hope also, for the candour and prayers of the true followers of the meek and charitable Lamb of God.

A

TREATISE

CONCERNING

RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

PART I.

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE AFFECTIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN RELIGION.

1 PETER i. 8.

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

SECT. I.

Introductory Remarks respecting the Affections.

IN these words, the apostle represents the state of the Christians to whom he wrote, under persecutions. To these persecutions he has respect, in the two preceding verses, when he speaks of *the trial of their faith*, and of *their being in heaviness through manifold temptations.*

Such *trials* are of threefold benefit to true religion. Hereby the *truth* of it is manifested, it appears to be indeed *true religion.* Trials, above all other things, have a tendency to distinguish true religion and false, and to cause the difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the name of *trials*, in the verse preceding the text, and innumerable other places.—They try the faith and religion of professors, of what sort it is, as apparent gold is tried in the fire, and manifested, whether it be true gold or not. And the faith of true Christians, being thus tried and proved to be true, is *found to praise, and honour, and glory.*

And then, these trials not only manifest the *truth* of true religion, but they make its genuine *beauty* and *amiableness* remarkably to appear. True virtue never appears so lovely, as when it is most oppressed: and the divine excellency of real Christianity, is never exhibited with such advantage, as when under the greatest trials. Then it is that true faith appears much more precious than gold; and upon this account, is *found to praise, and honour, and glory.*

Again, another benefit of such trials to true religion, is that they *purify* and *increase* it. They not only manifest it to be *true*, but also tend to *refine* it, and deliver it from those mixtures of what is false, which incumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They not only shew the amiableness of true religion to the best advantage, but they tend to increase its beauty by establishing and confirming it; making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from those things that obscured its lustre and glory. As gold that is tried in the fire is purged from its alloy, and all remainders of dross, and comes forth more beautiful; so true faith being tried as gold is tried in the fire, becomes more precious; and thus also is *found unto praise, and honour, and glory.* The apostle seems to have respect to each of these benefits in the verse preceding the text.

And, in the text, the apostle observes how true religion *operated* in these Christians under their persecutions, whereby these benefits appeared in them; or what manner of operation it was, whereby their religion, under persecution, was manifested to be *true* religion in its genuine *beauty* and *amiableness*, and also appeared to be *increased* and *purified*, and so was like to be *found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* And there were two kinds of operation, or exercise of true religion, in them, under their sufferings, that the apostle takes notice of in the text, wherein these benefits appeared.

1. *Love to Christ. Whom having not seen, ye love.* The world was ready to wonder, what strange principle it was, that influenced them to expose themselves to so great sufferings, to forsake the things that were seen, and renounce all that was dear and pleasant, which was the object of sense. They seemed to the men of the world as if they were beside themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in *their* view, that could induce them thus to suffer, or to support them under, and carry them through such trials. But although there was nothing that the world saw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily eyes, that thus influenced and supported them, yet they had a supernatural principle of love to something *unseen;* they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually,

whom the world saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily eyes.

2. *Joy in Christ.* Though their outward sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual joys were greater than their sufferings; and these supported them, and enabled them to suffer with cheerfulness.

There are two things which the apostle takes notice of in the text concerning this joy. 1. The manner in which it rises, the way in which Christ, though unseen, is the foundation of it, *viz.* by *faith;* which is the evidence of things not seen; *In whom, though now ye see him not, yet* BELIEVING, *ye rejoice.* 2. The *nature* of this joy; *unspeakable, and full of glory. Unspeakable* in the *kind* of it; very different from worldly joys, and carnal delights; of a vastly more pure, sublime, and heavenly nature, being something supernatural, and truly divine, and so ineffably excellent! the sublimity and exquisite sweetness of which, there were no words to set forth. Unspeakable also in *degree*; it having pleased God to give them this holy joy with a liberal hand, in their state of persecution.

Their joy was *full of glory.* Although the joy was unspeakable, and no words were sufficient to describe it; yet something might be said of it, and no words more fit to represent its excellency than these, that it was *full of glory;* or, as it is in the original, *glorified joy.* In rejoicing with this joy, their minds were filled, as it were, with a glorious brightness, and their natures exalted and perfected. It was a most worthy, noble rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debase the mind, as many carnal joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it. It was a prelibation of the joy of heaven, that raised their minds to a degree of heavenly blessedness; it filled their minds with the light of God's glory, and made themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.

Hence the proposition or doctrine, that I would raise from these words is this, TRUE RELIGION, IN GREAT PART, CONSISTS IN HOLY AFFECTIONS.

We see that the apostle, in remarking the operations and exercises of religion in these Christians, when it had its greatest trial by persecution, as gold is tried in the fire—and when it not only proved true, but was most pure from dross and mixtures—and when it appeared in them most in its genuine excellency and native beauty, and was found to praise, and honour, and glory—he singles out the religious affections of *love* and *joy,* as those exercises, wherein their religion did thus appear *true, pure* and *glorious.*

Here it may be inquired, what the *affections* of the mind are?

—I answer, The affections are no other than the more vigorous and *sensible exercises of the inclination and will* of the soul.

God has endued the soul with two principal faculties: The one, that by which it is capable of *perception* and speculation, or by which it discerns, and judges of things; which is called the *understanding*. The other, that by which the soul is some way *inclined* with respect to the things it views or considers: or it is the faculty by which the soul beholds things—not as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but—either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names: it is sometimes called the *inclination;* and, as it respects the actions determined and governed by it, the *will:* and the *mind*, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the *heart*.

The *exercises* of this last faculty are of two sorts; either those by which the soul is carried out towards the things in view in *approving* them, being pleased with, and inclined to them; or, those in which the soul opposes the things in view, in *disapproving* them; and in being displeased with, averse from, and rejecting them. And as the exercises of the inclination are various in their *kinds*, so they are much more various in their *degrees*. There are some exercises of pleasedness or displeasedness, inclination or disinclination, wherein the soul is carried but a little beyond a state of perfect indifference. And there are other degrees, wherein the approbation or dislike, pleasedness or aversion, are stronger; wherein we may rise higher and higher, till the soul comes to act vigorously and sensibly, and its actings are with that strength, that (through the laws of union which the Creator has fixed between soul and body) the motion of the blood and animal spirits begins to be sensibly altered: whence oftentimes arises some bodily sensation, especially about the *heart* and vitals, which are the fountain of the fluids of the body. Whence it comes to pass, that the *mind*, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, perhaps in all nations and ages, is called *the heart*. And it is to be noted, that they are these more vigorous and sensible exercises of this faculty, which are called the *affections*.

The *will*, and the *affections* of the soul, are not two faculties; the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere *actings* of the will and inclination, but only in the liveliness and sensibility of exercise.—It must be confessed, that language is here somewhat imperfect, the meaning of words in a considerable measure loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by custom which governs the use of language. In some sense, the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exercise further than it is *affected;* it is not moved out of a state of perfect indifference, any otherwise than as it is *affected* one way or other.

But yet there are many actings of the will and inclination, that are not so commonly called *affections*. In every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclination. It is our inclination that governs us in our actions; but *all the actings* of the inclination and will, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet, what are commonly called affections are not essentially different from them, but only in the *degree* and *manner* of exercise. In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view. These are not *essentially* different from the affections of *love* and *hatred*. A liking or inclination of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree vigorous and lively, is the very same thing with the affection of *love:* and a disliking and disinclining, if in a great degree, is the very same with *hatred*. In every act of the will *for*, or *towards* something not present, the soul is in some degree *inclined* to that thing; and that inclination, if in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of *desire*. And in every degree of an act of the will, wherein the soul approves of something present, there is a degree of pleasedness; and that pleasedness, if it be in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of *joy* or *delight*. And if the will disapproves of what is present, the soul is in some degree displeased, and if that displeasedness be great, it is the very same with the affection of *grief* or *sorrow*.

Such seems to be our nature, and such the laws of the union of soul and body, that there never is in any case whatsoever, any lively and vigorous exercise of the inclination, without some effect upon the body, in some alteration of the motion of its fluids, and especially of the animal spirits. And, on the other hand, from the same laws of union, over the constitution of the body, and the motion of its fluids, may promote the exercise of the affections. But yet, it is not the body, but the mind only, that is the proper seat of the affections. The body of man is no more capable of being really the subject of love or hatred, joy or sorrow, fear or hope, than the body of a tree, or than the same body of man is capable of thinking and understanding. As it is the soul only that has ideas, so it is the soul only that is pleased or displeased with its ideas. As it is the soul only that thinks, so it is the soul only that loves or hates, rejoices or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are these motions of the animal spirits, and fluids of the body, any thing properly belonging to the *nature* of the affections; though they always *accompany* them in the present state; but are only effects or concomitants of the affections, which are entirely distinct from the affections themselves, and no way essential to them; so that an unbodied spirit may be as capable of love and hatred, joy or sorrow, hope or fear, or other affections, as one that is united to a body.

The *affections* and *passions* are frequently spoken of as the same; and yet, in the more common use of speech, there is in some respect a difference. *Affection* is a word, that in its ordinary signification, seems to be something more extensive than *passion*, being used for all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination; but *passion* is used for those that are more sudden, and whose effects on the animal spirits are more violent, the mind being more overpowered, and less in its own command.

As all the exercises of inclination and will are concerned either in approving and liking, or disapproving and rejecting; so the affections are of two sorts; they are those by which the soul is carried out to what is in view, cleaving *to* it, or *seeking* it; or those by which it is averse *from* it, and *opposes* it. Of the former sort are *love, desire, hope, joy, gratitude, complacence.* Of the latter kind, are *hatred, fear, anger, grief,* and such like; which it is needless now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some affections wherein there is a *composition* of each of the aforementioned kinds of actings of the will; as in the affection of *pity*, there is something of the *former kind*, towards the person suffering, and something of the *latter*, towards what he suffers. And so in *zeal*, there is in it high *approbation* of some person or thing, together with vigorous *opposition* to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

SECT. II.

True Religion, in great part, consists in the Affections.

1. WHAT has been said of the *nature* of the affections makes this evident; and may be sufficient, without adding any thing further, to put this matter out of doubt; for who will deny that true religion consists, in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the *inclination* and *will* of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the *heart?* That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes, raising us but a little above a state of indifference. God, in his word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good earnest, *fervent in spirit*, and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion: Rom. xii. 11. *Be ye fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* Deut. x. 12. *And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?* And chap. vi. 4, 5. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* It

is such a fervent, vigorous engagedness of the heart in religion, that is the fruit of a real circumcision of the heart, or true regeneration, and that has the promises of life; Deut. xxx. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

If we be not in good earnest in religion, and our wills and inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, that there can be no suitableness in the exercises of our hearts, to their nature and importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing is vigour in the actings of our inclinations so requisite, as in religion; and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place, in its exercises in the heart, its principal and original seat. Hence true religion is called the *power of godliness*, in distinction from external appearances, which are *the form* of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it.* The Spirit of God, in those who have sound and solid religion, is a spirit of powerful holy affection; and, therefore, God is said *to have given them the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*, (2 Tim. i. 7.) And such, when they receive the Spirit of God in his sanctifying and saving influences, are said to be *baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;* by reason of the power and fervour of those exercises which the Spirit of God excites in them, and whereby *their hearts*, when grace is in exercise, may be said to *burn within them.* (Luke xxiv. 32.)

The business of *religion* is, from time to time, compared to those *exercises*, wherein men are wont to have their hearts and strength greatly exercised and engaged; such as running, wrestling or agonizing for a great prize or crown, and fighting with strong enemies that seek our lives, and warring as those that by violence take a city or kingdom. Though true grace has various degrees, and there are some who are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the power of godliness, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things with such strength and vigour, that these holy exercises prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them; for every true disciple of Christ, *loves him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands, yea more than his own life.* Hence it follows, that wherever true religion is, there are vigorous exercises of the inclination and will towards divine objects: but by what was said before, the vigorous, lively, and sensible exercises of the will, are no other than the *affections* of the soul.

2. The Author of our nature has not only given us affections, but has made them very much the spring of actions. As the *affections* not only necessarily belong to the *human nature*, but are a very *great part* of it; so (inasmuch as by regeneration persons are renewed in the whole man) *holy affections* not only necessarily belong to *true religion*, but are a very great part of such religion. And as true religion is practical, and God hath so constituted the human nature, that the affections are very much the spring of men's actions, this also shews, that true religion must consist very much in the affections.

Such is man's nature, that he is very inactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by either *love* or *hatred*, *desire*, *hope*, *fear*, or some other affection. These affections we see to be the moving springs in all the affairs of life, which engage men in all their pursuits; and especially in all affairs wherein they are earnestly engaged, and which they pursue with vigour. We see the world of mankind exceedingly busy and active; and their affections are the springs of motion; take away all *love* and *hatred*, all *hope* and *fear*, all *anger*, *zeal*, and affectionate *desire*, and the world would be, in a great measure, motionless and dead: there would be no such thing as activity amongst mankind, or any earnest pursuit whatsoever. It is affection that engages the covetous man, and him that is greedy of worldly profits; it is by the affections that the ambitious man is put forward in his pursuit of worldly glory; and the affections also actuate the voluptuous man, in his pleasure and sensual delights. The world continues, from age to age, in a continual commotion and agitation, in pursuit of these things; but take away affection, and the *spring* of all this motion would be gone; the motion itself would cease. And as in worldly things, worldly affections are very much the spring of men's motion and action; so in religious matters, the spring of their actions are very much religious affections: he that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is *engaged* in the business of religion.

3. Nothing is more manifest *in fact*, than that the things of religion take hold of men's souls no further than they *affect* them. There are multitudes who often hear the word of God, things infinitely great and important, and which most nearly concern them, yet all seems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no alteration in their disposition or behaviour; the reason is, they are not *affected* with what they hear. There are many who often hear of the glorious perfections of God, his almighty power, boundless wisdom, infinite majesty, and that holiness by which he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity; together with his infinite goodness and mercy. They hear of the great works of God's wisdom, power, and goodness, wherein there

appear the admirable manifestations of these perfections. They hear particularly of the unspeakable love of God and Christ, and what Christ has done and suffered. They hear of the great things of another world, of eternal misery, in bearing the fierceness and wrath of almighty God; and of endless blessedness and glory in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his love. They also hear the peremptory commands of God, his gracious counsels and warnings, and the sweet invitations of the gospel. Yet they remain as before, with no sensible alteration, either in heart or practice, because they are not *affected* with what they hear. I am bold to assert, that there never was any considerable change wrought in the mind or conversation of any person, by any thing of a religious nature that ever he read, heard or saw, who had not his affections moved. Never was a natural man engaged earnestly to seek his salvation; never were any such brought to cry after wisdom, and lift up their voice for understanding, and to wrestle with God in prayer for mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own unworthiness and deservings of God's displeasure: nor was ever one induced to fly for refuge unto Christ, while his heart remained *unaffected.* Nor was there ever a saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart *affected.* And, in a word, there never was any thing *considerable* brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his heart *deeply affected* by those things.

4. The holy scriptures every where place religion very much in the affections; such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal.

The scriptures place much of religion in godly *fear;* insomuch that an experience of it is often spoken of as the character of those who are truly religious persons. *They tremble at God's word,* they *fear before him, their flesh trembles for fear of him, they are afraid of his judgments, his excellency makes them afraid, and his dread falls upon them,* &c. An appellation commonly given the saints in scripture, is, *fearers of God,* or *they that fear the Lord.* And because this is a great part of true godliness, hence true godliness in general is very commonly called *the fear of God.*

So *hope* in God, and in the promises of his word, is often spoken of in the scripture, as a very considerable *part of true religion.* It is mentioned as one of the three great things of which religion consists, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Hope in the Lord is also frequently mentioned as the *character of the saints:* Psal. cxlvi. 5.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose HOPE *is in the Lord his God.* Jer. xvii. 7. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose* HOPE *the Lord is.* Psal. xxxi 24. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that* HOPE *in the Lord.* And the like in many other places. Religious fear and hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly constituting the character of the true saints; Psal. xxxiii. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that* FEAR *him, upon them that* HOPE *in his mercy.* Psal. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that* FEAR *him, in those that* HOPE *in his mercy.* Hope is so great a part of true religion, that the apostle says *we are saved by* HOPE, Rom. viii. 24. And this is spoken of as the *helmet* of the Christian soldier, 1 Thess. v. 8. *And for an helmet, the* HOPE *of salvation;* and the sure and stedfast *anchor* of the soul, which preserves it from being cast away by the storms of this evil world, Heb. vi. 19. *Which* HOPE *we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail.* It is spoken of as a great benefit which true saints receive by Christ's resurrection, 1 Pet. i. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively* HOPE, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

The scriptures place religion very much in the affection of *love;* love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards. The contrary affection of *hatred* also, as having sin for its object, is spoken of in scripture as no inconsiderable part of true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion may be known and distinguished. Prov. viii. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to* HATE *evil.* Accordingly, the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this, Psal. xcvii. 10. *Ye that love the Lord,* HATE *evil.* And the psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity; Psal. ci. 2, 3. *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I* HATE *the work of them that turn aside.* Psal. cxix. 104. *I* HATE *every false way.* So ver. 128. Again Psal. cxxxix. 21. *Do I not* HATE *them, O Lord, that hate thee?*

So holy *desire*, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in scripture as an important part of true religion; Is. xxvi. 8. *The* DESIRE *of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.* Psal. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I* DESIRED *of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the*

days of my life; to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. Psal. xlii. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God, my soul* THIRSTETH *for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?* Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. *My soul* THIRSTETH *for thee, my flesh* LONGETH *for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul* LONGETH, *yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* Psal. cxix. 20. *My soul breaketh for the* LONGING *that it hath unto thy judgments at all times*.* Such a holy desire, or thirst of soul, denotes a man *truly blessed*, Matth. v. 6. *Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* And this holy thirst is connected with the blessings of *eternal life.* Rev. xxi. 6. *I will give unto him that is* ATHIRST, *of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

The scriptures speak of holy *joy*, as a great part of true religion. So it is represented in the text. And as an important part of religion, it is often pressed with great earnestness; Psal. xxxvii. 4. DELIGHT *thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.* Psal. xcvii. 12. REJOICE *in the Lord, ye righteous.* So Psal. xxxiii. 1. REJOICE *in the Lord, O ye righteous*, Matth. v. 12. REJOICE, *and be exceeding glad.* Phil. iii. 1. *Finally, brethren,* REJOICE *in the Lord.* And chap. iv. 4. REJOICE *in the Lord alway: and again I say,* REJOICE. 1 Thess. v. 16. REJOICE *evermore.* Psal. clix. 2. *Let Israel* REJOICE *in him that made him: let the children of Zion be* JOYFUL *in their King.* This is mentioned among the principal fruits of the Spirit of grace, Gal. v. 22. *The fruit of the Spirit is love,* JOY, &c.—The psalmist mentions his holy joy, as an evidence of his sincerity, Psal. cxix. 14. *I have* REJOICED *in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.*

Religious *sorrow*, mourning, and brokenness of heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great part of true religion. These things are often mentioned as distinguishing qualities of the true saints, and a great part of their character; Matth. v. 4. *Blessed are they that* MOURN: *for they shall be comforted.* Psal. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a* BROKEN HEART; *and saveth such as be of a* CONTRITE *spirit.* Is. lxi. 1, 2. *The Lord hath anointed me—to bind up the* BROKEN HEARTED,—*to comfort all that* MOURN. This godly sorrow and brokenness of heart is often spoken of, not only as a distinguishing

* So Psal. lxxiii. 25. and cxliii. 6, 7. and cxxx. 6. Cant. iii. 1, 2. and vi. 8.

character of the saints, but as that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; Psal. li 17. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Is. lvii. 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Chap. lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.*

Another affection often mentioned, as that in the exercise of which, much of true religion appears, is *gratitude;* especially as exercised in thankfulness and praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the book of Psalms, and other parts of the holy scriptures, I need not mention particular texts.

Again, the holy scriptures frequently speak of *compassion* or *mercy*, as a very great and essential thing in true religion; insomuch that a *merciful* man, and a *good* man, are equivalent terms in scripture; Is. lvii. 1. *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and* MERCIFUL MEN *are taken away.* And the scripture chooses out this quality, as that by which, in a peculiar manner, a righteous man is decyphered; Psal. xxxvii. 21. *The* RIGHTEOUS *sheweth* MERCY, *and giveth;* and ver. 26. *He is ever* MERCIFUL, *and lendeth.* And Prov. xiv. 31. *He that honoureth the Lord, hath* MERCY *on the poor.* And Col. iii. 12. *Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,* BOWELS OF MERCIES, *&c.* This is one of those great things by which the truly blessed are described by our Saviour, Matth. v. 7. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* And this Christ also speaks of, as one of the weightier matters of the law, Matth. xxiii. 23. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment,* MERCY, *and faith.* To the like purpose is Mic. vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and love* MERCY, *and walk humbly with thy God?* And also Hos. vi. 6. *For I desired* MERCY, *and not sacrifice;* a text much delighted in by our Saviour, it seems, by his manner of citing it once and again. (Matth. ix. 13. and xii. 7.)

Zeal is also spoken of as a very essential part of the religion of true saints. This was a great thing which Christ had in view, in giving himself for our redemption, Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people,* ZEALOUS *of good works.* And this was the great thing wanting in the luke-warm Laodiceans. (Rev. iii. 15, 16, 19.)

I have mentioned but a few texts out of an innumerable multitude, which place religion very much in the affections. But what has been observed may be sufficient to shew, that they who maintain the contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other rule by which to judge of the nature of religion.

5. The scriptures represent true religion, as being summarily comprehended in *love*, the chief of the affections, and the fountain of all others. So our blessed Saviour represents the matter, in answer to the lawyer who asked him, Which was the great commandment of the law? (Matth. xxii. 37—40.) *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* These two commandments comprehend all the duty prescribed in the law and the prophets. And the apostle Paul makes the same representation of the matter; as in Rom. xiii. 8. *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.* And ver. 10. *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* And Gal. v. 14. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* So likewise in 1 Tim. i. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, &c.* The same apostle speaks of *love*, as the greatest thing in religion, as the essence and soul of it; without which the greatest knowledge and gifts, the most glaring profession, and every thing else which appertains to religion, are vain and worthless. He also represents it as the *fountain* from whence proceeds all that is good, in 1 Cor. xiii. throughout; for that which is there rendered *charity*, is in the original αγαπη, the proper English of which is *love*.

Now, although it be true, that the love thus spoken of, includes the whole of a sincerely benevolent propensity of the soul towards God and man; yet, it is evident from what has been before observed, that this propensity or inclination of the soul, when in sensible and vigorous exercise, becomes *affection*, and is no other than affectionate love. And surely it is such vigorous and fervent love, which Christ represents as the sum of all religion, when he speaks of loving God with *all our hearts*, with *all our souls*, and with *all our minds*, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Indeed it cannot be supposed, when this affection of love is spoken of as the sum of all religion, that hereby is meant the act, exclusively of the habit, or that the exercise of the understanding is excluded, which is implied in all reasonable affection. But it is doubtless true, and evident from the scriptures, that the *essence* of all true religion lies in holy love; and that in this divine affec-

tion—and habitual disposition to it, that light which is the foundation of it, and those things which are its fruits—consists the *whole* of religion.

From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great part of true religion consists in the affections. For love is not only one of the affections, but it is the first and chief of them, and the fountain of all the others. From *love* arises *hatred* of those things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppose and thwart us in those things that we delight in; and from the various exercises of love and hatred, according to the circumstances of the objects of these affections, as present or absent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable, arise all those other affections of *desire*, *hope*, *fear*, *joy*, *grief*, *gratitude*, *anger*, &c. From a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent *love to God*, will necessarily arise other *religious* affections; hence will arise an intense *hatred* and a *fear* of sin; a *dread* of God's displeasure; *gratitude* to God for his goodness; *complacence* and *joy* in God when he is graciously and sensibly present; *grief* when he is absent; a joyful *hope* when a future enjoyment of God is expected; and fervent *zeal* for the divine glory. In like manner, from a fervent *love to men*, will arise all other virtuous affections towards them.

6. The religion of the most eminent saints of whom we have an account in the scripture, consisted much in holy *affections*.—I shall take particular notice of three eminent saints, who have expressed the frame and sentiments of their own hearts, described their own religion, and the manner of their intercourse with God, in the writings which they have left us, and which are a part of the sacred canon.

The *first* instance is *David*, that *man after God's own heart*; who has given us a lively portraiture of his religion in the book of Psalms. Those holy songs are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and holy *affections*; such as an humble and fervent *love* to God, *admiration* of his glorious perfections and wonderful works, earnest *desires*, thirstings, and pantings of soul after him; *delight* and *joy* in God, a sweet and melting *gratitude* for his great goodness, an holy *exultation* and triumph of soul in his favour, sufficiency, and faithfulness; his *love* to, and *delight* in the saints, the excellent of the earth, his great *delight* in the word and ordinances of God, his *grief* for his own and others sins, and his fervent *zeal* for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection of which the Psalms of David are every where full, are the more to our present purpose, because those psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint, but were also, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fit-

ted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the *Psalmist of Israel*, as the subordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worship and praises; and in many of the psalms he speaks of the name of Christ, as personating him in these breathings forth of holy affections; and in many others he speaks in the name of the church.

Another instance I shall observe, is the apostle *Paul;* who was, in many respects, the chief of all the ministers of the New Testament; being above all others a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his name before the Gentiles. He was made the chief instrument of propagating and establishing the Christian church in the world, and of distinctly revealing the glorious mysteries of the gospel, for the instruction of the church in all ages; and (as not improbably thought by some) was the most eminent servant of Christ that ever lived, and received the highest rewards in the heavenly kingdom of his Master. By what is said of him in the scripture, he appears to have been a person full of affection; and it is very manifest, that the religion he expresses in his epistles, consisted very much in holy affections. It appears by all his expressions of himself, that he was, in the course of his life, inflamed, actuated, and entirely swallowed up, by a most ardent *love* to his glorious Lord, esteeming all thing as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and esteeming them but dung that he might win him. He represents himself as overpowered by this holy affection, and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his service, through all difficulties and sufferings, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. And his epistles are full of expressions of an overflowing affection towards the people of Christ: he speaks of his *dear love* to them, 2 Cor. xii. 19. Phil. iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 2. of his *abundant love*, 2 Cor. ii. 4.; and of his *affectionate* and *tender love*, as of a nurse towards her children, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8. *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.* So also he speaks of his *bowels of love*, Phil. i. 8. Philem. 5. 12. and 20. of his *earnest care* for others, 2 Cor. viii. 16. of his *bowels of pity* or *mercy* towards them, Phil. ii. 1.; and of his concern for others, even to *anguish of heart*, 2 Cor. ii. 4. *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.* He speaks of the *great conflict* of his soul for them, Col. ii. 1. and of *great and continual grief* he had *in his heart* from *compassion* to the Jews, Rom. ix. . He speaks of *his mouth being opened, and his heart enlarged* to-

wards christians, 2 Cor. vi. 11. *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.* He often speaks of his *affectionate and longing desires*, (1 Thess. ii. 8. Rom. i. 11. Phil. i. 8. and chap iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 4.)

The same apostle very often, in his epistles, expresses the affection of *joy*, (2 Cor. i. 12. and chap. vii. 7. and ver. 9. 16. Phil. i. 4. and chap. ii. 1, 2. and chap. iii. 3. Col. i. 24. 1 Thess. iii. 9.) He speaks of his *rejoicing with great joy*, (Phil. iv. 10. Philem. 1. 7.) of his *joying and rejoicing*, (Phil. ii. 1. 7.) of his *rejoicing exceedingly*, (2 Cor. vii. 13.) being *filled with comfort exceeding joyful*, (2 Cor. vii. 4.) and *always rejoicing*, (2 Cor. vi. 10.) So he speaks of the *triumphs* of his soul, (2 Cor. ii. 14.) and of *his glorying in tribulation.* (2 Thess. i. 4. and Rom. v. 3.) In Phil. i. 20. he speaks of his *earnest expectation*, and *his hope.* He likewise expresses an affection of *godly jealousy*, 2. Cor. xi. 2, 3. And it appears by his whole history, after his conversion, that the affection of *zeal*, as having the cause of his Master and the interest and prosperity of his church for its object, was mighty in him, continually inflaming his heart, strongly engaging to great and constant labours, in instructing, exhorting, warning, and reproving others, *travailing in birth with them;* conflicting with those powerful and innumerable enemies who continually opposed him, wrestling with principalities and powers, not fighting as one who beats the air, running the race set before him, continually pressing forwards through all manner of difficulties and sufferings; so that others thought him quite beside himself. And how full he was of affection further appears by his being so full of tears: in 2 Cor. ii. 4. he speaks of his *many tears;* and so Acts xx. 19. and of his *tears* that he shed *continually, night and day*, ver. 31.

Now if any one can consider these accounts given in the scripture of this great apostle, and which he gives of himself, and yet not see that his religion consisted much in *affection*, must have a strange faculty of managing his eyes in order to shut out the light which shines most full in his face.

The other instance I shall mention, is that of the apostle *John*, the beloved disciple, who was the nearest and dearest to his Master of any of the twelve, and who was by him admitted to the greatest privileges of any of them. He was not only one of the three who were admitted to be present with him in the mount at his transfiguration, and at the raising of Jairus' daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his agony, and one of the three spoken of by the apostle Paul, as the three main pillars of the christian church, but he was favoured above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's bosom at his last supper, and in being chosen by Christ as the disciple to whom he would reveal his

wonderful dispensations towards his church to the end of time. By him was shut up the canon of the New Testament, and of the whole scripture; and he was preserved much longer than all the rest of the apostles, to set all things in order in the christian church after their death.

It is evident by all his writings, that he was a person remarkably full of affection: his addresses to those whom he wrote to being inexpressibly tender and pathetic, breathing nothing but the most fervent *love*, as though he were all made up of sweet and holy affection. The proofs of which cannot be given without disadvantage, unless we should transcribe his whole writings.

7. He whom God sent into the world, to be the light of the world and the head of the whole church, and the perfect example of true religion and virtue for the imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole flock should follow wherever he goes, even the *Lord Jesus Christ*, was of a remarkably tender and affectionate heart; and his virtue was expressed very much in the exercise of holy affections. He was the greatest instance of ardency, vigour, and strength of *love*, to both God and man, that ever was. It was these affections which got the victory, in that mighty struggle and conflict of his affections, in his agonies, when *he prayed more earnestly, and offered strong crying and tears*, and wrestled in tears and in blood. Such was the power of the exercises of his holy love, that they were stronger than death, and in that great struggle, overcame those strong exercises of the natural affections of fear and grief, when he was sore amazed, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

He also appeared to be full of affection, in the course of his life. We read of his great *zeal*, fulfilling that expression in the 69th Psalm, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*, John ii. 17. We read of his *grief* for the sins of men, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts;* and his breaking forth in tears and exclamations, from the consideration of the sin and misery of ungodly men, and on the sight of the city of Jerusalem, which was full of such inhabitants, Luke xix. 41, 42. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* With chap. xiii. 34. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not?* We read of Christ's earnest *desire*, Luke xxii. 15. *With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.* We often read of the affection of *pity* or *compassion* in Christ, (Matth. xv. 32. and xviii. 34. Luke vii. 13.) and of his

being moved with compassion, (Matth. ix. 36. and xiv. 14. and Mark vi. 34.) And how tender did his heart appear to be, on occasion of Mary's and Martha's mourning for their brother, and coming to him with their complaints and tears? Their tears soon drew tears from his eyes; he was affected with their grief, and *wept* with them; though he knew their sorrow should so soon be turned into joy, by their brother being raised from the dead; see John xi. And how ineffably affectionate was that last and dying discourse, which Jesus had with his eleven disciples the evening before he was crucified; when he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great difficulties and sufferings they should meet with in the world, when he was gone; and comforted and counselled them, as his dear little children; and bequeathed to them his Holy Spirit, and therein his peace, his comfort and joy, as it were in his last will and testament, in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John; and concdlued the whole with that affectionate intercessory prayer for them, and his whole church, in chap. xvii. Of all the discourses ever penned or uttered by the mouth of any man, this seems to be the most affectionate, and affecting.

8. The religion of *heaven* consists very much in affection.—There is doubtless true religion in heaven, and true religion in its utmost purity and perfection. But according to the scripture representation of the heavenly state, the religion of heaven consists chiefly in holy and mighty *love* and *joy*, and the expression of these in most fervent and exalted praises. So that the religion of the saints in heaven, consists in the same things with that religion of the saints on earth, which is spoken of in our text, viz. *love* and *joy unspeakable, and full of glory.** Now, it would be very foolish to pretend, that because the saints in heaven are not united to flesh and blood, and have no animal fluids to be moved (through the laws of union of soul and body) with those great emotions of their souls, that therefore their exceeding love and joy are no affections. We are not speaking of the affections of the body, but those of the soul, the chief of which are *love and joy*. When these are in the soul, whether that be in the body or out of it, the soul is affected and moved. And when they are in the soul, in that strength in which they are in the saints in heaven, it is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the same thing, has great affections. It is true, we do not experimentally know what love and joy are in a soul out of a body, or in a glorified body; *i. e.* we have not had experience of love and joy in a soul in these circumstances; but the saints on earth do know what divine love and joy in the soul are, and they know that love and joy are of the same kind with the love and joy which are in heaven, in separate souls there. The love and joy of the saints on

earth, is the beginning and dawning of the light, life, and blessedness of heaven, and is like their love and joy there; or rather, the same in nature, though not the same in degree and circumstances.* It is unreasonable therefore to suppose, that the love and joy of the saints in heaven differ not only in degree and circumstances, from the holy love and joy of the saints on earth, but also in nature, so that they are no affections; and merely because they have no blood and animal spirits to be set in motion by them. The motion of the blood and animal spirits is not of the *essence* of these affections, in men on earth, but the *effect* of them; although by their reaction they may make some circumstantial difference in the sensation of the mind. There is a sensation of the *mind* which loves and rejoices, *antecedent* to any effects on the fluids of the body; and therefore, does not depend on these motions in the body, and so may be in the soul without the body. And wherever there are the exercises of love and joy, there is that sensation of the mind, whether it be in the body or out; and that inward sensation, or kind of spiritual feeling, is what is called affection. The soul, when it is thus moved, is said to be *affected*, and especially when this inward sensation and motion are to a very high degree, as they are in the saints in heaven. If we can learn any thing of the state of heaven from the scripture, the love and joy that the saints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impressing the heart with the strongest and most lively sensation of inexpressible sweetness, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like to a flame of fire. And if such love and joy be not affections, then the word *affection* is of no use in language.—Will any say, that the saints in heaven, in beholding the face of their Father and the glory of their Redeemer, in contemplating his wonderful works, and particularly his laying down his life for them, have their hearts nothing moved and affected by all which they behold or consider?

Hence, therefore, the *religion of heaven*, being full of holy love and joy, consists very much in affection: and therefore, undoubtedly, *true religion* consists very much in affection. The way to learn the true nature of any thing, is to go where that thing is to be found in its purity and perfection. If we would know the nature of true gold, we must view it, not in the ore, but when it is refined. If we would learn what true religion is, we must go where there is true religion, and nothing but true religion, and in its highest perfection, without any defect or mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this world, they are strangers

* This is evident by many scriptures, as Prov. iv. 18. John iv. 14. and chap. vi. 40. 47. 50. 51. 54. 58. 1 John iii. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 8—12.

here, and belong to heaven; they are born from above, heaven is their native country, and the nature which they receive by this heavenly birth, is an heavenly nature, they receive *an anointing from above;* that principle of true religion which is in them, is a communication of the religion of heaven; their grace is the dawn of glory; and God fits them for that world by conforming them to it.

9. This appears from the nature and design of the ordinances and duties, which God hath appointed, as means and expressions of true religion.

To instance in the duty of *prayer:* It is manifest, we are not appointed, in this duty, to declare God's perfections, his majesty, holiness, goodness, and all-sufficiency; our own meanness, emptiness, dependence, and unworthiness, our wants and desires, in order to inform God of these things, or to incline his heart, and prevail with him to be willing to shew us mercy; but rather suitably to affect our own hearts with the things we express, and so to prepare us to receive the blessings we ask. And such gestures and manner of external behaviour in the worship of God, which custom has made to be significations of humility and reverence, can be of no further use, than as they have some tendency to *affect* our own hearts, or the hearts of others.

And the duty of *singing* praises to God, seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections. No other reason can be assigned, why we should express ourselves to God in verse, rather than in prose, and do it with music, but only, that such is our nature and frame that these things have a tendency to move our affections.

The same thing appears in the nature and design of the *sacraments*, which God hath appointed. God, considering our frame, hath not only appointed that we should be told of the great things of the gospel and the redemption of Christ, and be instrucetd in them by his word, but also that they should be, as it were, exhibited to our view in sensible representations, the more to affect us with them.

And the impressing of divine things on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great end for which God has ordained, that his word delivered in the holy scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon men, in *preaching*. And therefore it does not answer the aim which God had in this institution, merely for men to have good commentaries and expositions on the scripture, and other good books of divinity; because, although these may tend, as well as preaching, to give a good doctrinal or speculative understanding of the word of God, yet they have not an equal tendency to impress them on men's hearts and affections. God hath appointed a particular and lively applica-

tion of his word, in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect sinners with the importance of religion, their own misery, the necessity of a remedy, and the glory and sufficiency of a remedy provided; to stir up the pure minds of the saints, quicken their affections by often bringing the great things of religion to their remembrance, and setting them in their proper colours, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already, 2 Pet. i. 12, 13. And particularly, to promote those two affections in them, which are spoken of in the text, *love* and *joy; Christ gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; that the body of Christ might be edified in love*, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 16. The apostle, in instructing and counselling Timothy, concerning the work of the ministry, informs him, that the great end of that word which a minister is to preach, is *love* or *charity*, 1 Tim. i. 3—5. And God has appointed preaching as a means to promote in the saints *joy:* therefore ministers are called *helpers of their joy*, 2 Cor. i. 24.

10. It is an evidence that true religion lies very much in the affections, that the scriptures place the sin of the heart very much in *hardness of heart.* It was hardness of heart, which excited grief and displeasure in Christ towards the Jews, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* It is from men's having such a heart as this, that they treasure up wrath for themselves; Rom. ii. 5. *After thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* The reason given why the house of Israel would not obey God, was that they were hard-hearted. Ezek. iii. 7. *But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.* The wickedness of that perverse rebellious generation in the wilderness, is ascribed to the hardness of their hearts; Psal. xcv. 7—10. *To-day if ye will hear my voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your farthers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work: forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart*, &c.—This is spoken of as what prevented Zedekiah's turning to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. *He stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning to the Lord God of Israel.* This principle is that from whence men are without the fear of God, and depart from his ways: Is. lxiii. 17. *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our heart from thy fear?* And men rejecting Christ, and opposing Christianity, are charged with this principle; Acts xix. 7. *But divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude.*—God's leaving men to the pow-

er of the sin and corruption of the heart, is often expressed by his hardening their hearts; Rom. ix. 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* John xii. 40. *He hath blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts.* And the apostle seems to speak of *an evil heart, that departs from the living God*, and *a hard heart*, as the same thing, Heb. iii. 8. *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation*, &c. ver. 12, 13. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily while it is called, To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And that great work of God in conversion, which consists in delivering a person from the power of sin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's *taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh*, (Ezek. ix. 19. and chap. xxxvi. 26.)

Now, by a *hard* heart is plainly meant an *unaffected* heart, or a heart not easy to be moved with virtuous affections, like a stone, insensible, stupid, unmoved, and hard to be impressed. Hence the hard heart is called a *stony heart*, and is opposed to an *heart of flesh*, that has feeling, and is sensibly touched and moved. We read in scripture of a *hard heart*, and a *tender heart:* and doubtless we are to understand these, as contrary the one to the other. But what is a tender heart, but a heart which is easily impressed with what ought to affect it? God commends Josiah, because his heart was tender: and it is evident by those things which are mentioned as expressions and evidences of this tenderness of heart, that by it is meant, his heart being easily moved with religious and pious affections; 2 Kings xxii. 19. *Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardst what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.* And this is one thing, wherein it is necessary we should *become as little children, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God*, even that we should have our hearts tender, and easily affected and moved in spiritual and divine things, as little children have in other things.

It is very plain in some places, that by hardness of heart is meant a heart void of affection. So, to signify the ostrich's being without natural affection to her young, it is said, Job xxxix. 16. *She hardeneth her heart against her young ones, as though they were not hers.* So a person having a heart unaffected in time of danger, is expressed by his hardening his heart, Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief.*

Now, therefore, since it is so plain, that by a hard heart in scripture, is meant a heart destitute of pious affections; and since also the scriptures so frequently place the sin and corruption of the heart in its hardness; it is evident, that the grace and holiness of the heart, on the contrary, must in a great measure consist in its having pious affections, and being easily susceptive of such affections. Divines are generally agreed, that sin radically and fundamentally consists in what is negative, or privative, having its root and foundation in a privation or want of holiness. And therefore undoubtedly, if sin very much consist in hardness of heart, and so in the want of pious affections, holiness does consist very much *in those pious affections.*

I am far from supposing that all affections manifest a tender heart: hatred, anger, vain glory, and other selfish and self-exalting affections, may greatly prevail in the hardest heart. But yet it is evident, that *hardness of heart,* and *tenderness of heart,* are expressions that relate to the affections of the heart, and denote its being susceptible of, or shut up against, *certain affections;* of which I shall have occasion to speak more afterwards.

Upon the whole, I think it clearly and abundantly evident, that true religion *lies very much in the affections.* Not that I think these arguments prove, that religion in the hearts of the truly godly, is ever in exact proportion to the degree of affection and present emotion of the mind: for, undoubtedly, there is much affection in the true saints which is not spiritual; their religious affections are often mixed; all is not from grace, but much from nature. And though the affections have not their seat in the body, yet the constitution of the body may very much contribute to the present emotion of the mind. The degree of religion is to be estimated by the fixedness and strength of habit exercised in affection, whereby holy affection is habitual, rather than by the degree of the present exercise: and the strength of that habit is not always in proportion to outward effects and manifestations, or indeed inward ones, in the hurry, vehemence, and sudden changes of the course of the thoughts. But yet it is evident, that religion consists so much in the affections, as that without holy affection there is no true religion. No light in the understanding is good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart; no habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no such exercise; and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from such exercises.

SECT. III.

Some Inferences deduced from the Doctrine.

1. We may hence learn how great their error is, who are for discarding all religious affections, as having nothing solid or substantial in them. There seems to be too much of a disposition this way prevailing at this time. Because many who, in the late extraordinary season, appeared to have great religious affections, did not manifest a right temper of mind, and run into many errors, in the heat of their zeal; and because the high affections of many seem to be so soon come to nothing, and some who seemed to be mightily raised and swallowed with joy and zeal for a while, seem to have returned like the dog to his vomit; hence religious affections in general are grown out of credit with great numbers, as though true religion did not at all consist in them. Thus we easily and naturally run from one extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other extreme; there was a prevalent disposition to look upon all high religious affections as eminent exercises of true grace, without much inquiry into the nature and source of those affections, and the manner in which they arose. If persons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raised, so as to be full of religious talk, and express themselves with great warmth and earnestness, and to be *filled*, or to be *very full*, as the phrases were; it was too much the manner, without further examination, to conclude such persons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent experience of his gracious influences. This was the extreme which was prevailing three or four years ago. But of late, instead of *esteeming* and *admiring* all religious *affections*, *without distinction*, it is much more prevalent to *reject* and *discard* all *without distinction*. Herein appears the subtilty of Satan. While he saw that *affections* were much in vogue, knowing the greater part were not versed in such things, and had not had much experience of great *religous affections*, enabling them to judge well, and to distinguish between true and false; then he knew he could best play his game, by sowing tares amongst the the wheat, and mingling *false affections* with the works of God's Spirit. He knew this to be a likely way to delude and eternally ruin many souls, and greatly to wound religion in the saints, and entangle them in a dreadful wilderness, and by and by to bring all religion into disrepute.

But now, when the ill consequences of these *false affections* appear, and it is become very apparent, that some of those emotions which made a glaring shew, and were by many greatly admired, were in reality nothing; the devil sees it to be for his in-

terest to go another way to work, and to endeavour to his utmost to propagate and establish a persuasion, that all affections and sensible emotions of the mind in religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided, and carefully guarded against, as things of a pernicious tendency. This he knows is the way to bring all religion to a mere lifeless formality, and effectually to shut out the power of godliness and every thing spiritual. For although to true religion there must indeed be something else besides affection, yet true religion consists so much in the affections, that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection, is in a state of spiritual death, and is wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening, saving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart. As there is no true religion where there is nothing else but affection, so there is no true religion where there is no *religious affection*. As on the one hand, there must be light in the understanding, as well as an *affected* fervent heart; or where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart: so, on the other hand, where there is a kind of light without heat, a head stored with notions and speculations with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light, that knowledge is no true spiritual knowledge of divine things. If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart. The reason why men are not affected by such infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful things, as they often hear and read of in the word of God, is, undoubtedly, because they are blind; if they were not so, it would be impossible, and utterly inconsistent with human nature, that their hearts should be otherwise than strongly impressed, and greatly moved by such things.

This manner of slighting all religious *affections*, is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, to encourage them in their stupidity and senselessness, to keep them in a state of spiritual death as long as they live, and bring them at last to death eternal. The prevailing prejudice against *religious affections* at this day, is apparently of awful effect to harden the hearts of sinners, to damp the graces of the saints, to preclude the effect of ordinances, and hold us down in a state of dullness and apathy; and this undoubtedly causes many persons greatly to offend God, in entertaining mean and low thoughts of the extraordinary work he has lately wrought in this land. For persons to despise and cry down all religious *affections*, is the way to shut all religion out of their own hearts, and to make thorough work in ruining their souls.

They who condemn high affections in others, are certainly not likely to have high affections themselves. And let it be considered, that they who have but little religious affection, have certainly

but little religion. And they who condemn others for their *religious affections*, and have none themselves, have no religion. There are false *affections*, and there are true. A man's having *much affection*, does not prove that he has any true religion: but if he has *no affection*, it proves that he has no true religion. The right way, is not to reject all affections, nor to approve all; but to distinguish between them, approving some and rejecting others; separating between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the dross, the precious and the vile.

2. If true religion lies much in the *affections*, we may infer, that such means are to be desired, as have much tendency to move the affections. Such books, and such a way of preaching the word and the administration of ordinances, and such a way of worshipping God in prayer and praises, as has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of those who attend these means, is much to be desired.

Such kind of means would formerly have been highly approved, and applauded by the generality of people, as the most excellent and profitable, and having the greatest tendency to promote the ends of the means of grace. But the prevailing taste seems of late strangely to be altered: that pathetic manner of praying and preaching which would formerly have been admired and extolled, and for this reason, because it had such a tendency to move the affections, now, in great multitudes, immediately excites disgust, and moves no other affections, than those of displeasure and contempt.

Perhaps, formerly, the generality (at least of the common people) were in the extreme of looking too much to an affectionate address in public performances: but now, a very great part of the people seem to have gone far into a contrary extreme. Indeed there *may* be such means, as have a great tendency to stir up the passions of weak and ignorant persons, and yet have none to benefit their souls: for though they may have a tendency to excite *affections*, they have little or none to excite *gracious* affections. But, undoubtedly, if the things of religion in the means used, are treated according to their nature, and exhibited truly, so as tends to convey just apprehensions and a right judgment of them, the more they have a tendency to move the affections, the better.

3. If true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may learn, what great cause we have to be ashamed and confounded before God, that we are no more *affected* with the great things of religion. It appears from what has been said, that this arises from our having so little true religion.

God has given to mankind affections, for the same purpose as that for which he has given all the faculties and principles of the

human soul, viz. that they might be subservient to man's chief end, and the great business for which God has created him, that is, the business of religion. And yet how common is it among mankind, that their affections are much more exercised and engaged in other matters, than in religion! In matters which concern men's worldly interest, their outward delights, their honour and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their desires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in these things their hearts are tender and sensible, easily moved, deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with grief at worldly losses, and highly raised with joy at worldly successes and prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most men, about the great things of another world! how dull are their affections! how heavy and hard their hearts in these matters! here their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small. How they can sit and hear of the infinite height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus; of his giving his infinitely dear Son to be offered up a sacrifice for the sins of men, and of the unparalleled love of the innocent, holy Lamb of God manifested in his dying agonies, his bloody sweat, his loud and bitter cries and bleeding heart; and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deserved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory; and yet be cold, heavy, insensible, and regardless! Where are the exercises of our affections proper, if not here? what is it that more requires them? and what can be a fit occasion of their lively and vigorous exercise, if not such as this? Can any thing be set in our view, greater and more important? any thing more wonderful and surprising? or that more nearly concerns our interest? Can we suppose that the wise Creator implanted such principles in our nature as the affections, to lie still on such an occasion as this? Can any Christian, who believes the truth of these things, entertain such thoughts?

If we ought ever to exercise our affections at all, and if the Creator has not unwisely constituted the human nature in making these principles a part of it, then they ought to be exercised about those objects which are most worthy of them. But is there any thing in heaven or earth, so worthy to be the objects of our admiration and love! our earnest and longing desires, hope, rejoicing, and fervent zeal, as those things which are held forth to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ? There not only are things declared most worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the most affecting manner. The glory and beauty of the blessed JEHOVAH, which is most worthy in itself, to be the object of our admiration and love, is there exhibited in the most *affecting* manner that

can be conceived of; as it appears shining in all its lustre, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compassionate, dying Redeemer. All the *virtues* of the Lamb of God, his humility, patience, meekness, submission, obedience, love, and compassion, are exhibited to our view, in a manner the most tending to move our affections, of any that can be imagined; for they all had their greatest trial, their highest exercise, and brightest manifestation, when he was in the most affecting circumstances; even when he was under his last sufferings, those unutterable and unparalleled sufferings which he endured from his tender love and pity to us. There, also, the hateful *nature* of our *sins* is manifested in the most affecting manner possible; as we see the dreadful effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to answer for us, suffered for them. And there we have the most affecting manifestations of God's *hatred* of sin, and his wrath and justice in punishing it; as we see his justice in the strictness and inflexibleness of it, and his wrath in its terribleness, in so dreadfully punishing our sins, in one who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us. So has God disposed things in the affair of our redemption, and in his glorious dispensations revealed to us in the gospel, as though every thing were purposely contrived in such a manner, as to have the greatest possible tendency to reach our hearts in the most tender part, and move our affections most sensibly and strongly. How great cause have we, therefore, to be humbled to the dust, that we are no more affected!

PART II.

SHEWING WHAT ARE NO CERTAIN SIGNS THAT RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS ARE TRULY GRACIOUS, OR THAT THEY ARE NOT.

IF any one, on reading what has been just now said, is ready to acquit himself, and say, "I am not one of those who have no religious affections; I am often greatly moved with the consideration of the great things of religion; let him not content himself with this; for, as we ought not to reject and condemn all affections, as though true religion did not at all consist in them; so, on the other hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiously affected had true grace, and was therein the subject of the saving influences of the Spirit of God. Therefore, the right way is to distinguish, among religious affections, between one sort and another. Let us now endeavour to do this, by noticing, in the first place, some *things, which are no signs that affections are gracious, or that they are not.*

SECT. I.

It is no sign, one way or other, that religious affections are very great, or raised very high.

Some are ready to condemn all high affection: if persons appear to have their religious affections raised to an extraordinary pitch, they are prejudiced against them, and determine that they are delusions, without further inquiry. But if, as before proved, true religion lies very much in religious affections, then it follows, that if there be a great deal of true religion, there will be great religious affections; if true religion in the hearts of men be raised to a great height, divine and holy affections will be raised to a great height.

Love is an affection; but will any Christian say, men ought not to love God and Jesus Christ in a high degree? and will any say, we ought not to have a very great hatred of sin, and a very deep sorrow for it? or that we ought not to exercise a high degree of gratitude to God, for the mercies we receive of him, and the great things he has done for the salvation of fallen men? or that we should not have very great and strong desires after God and holiness? Is there any who will profess, that his affections in religion are great enough, and will say, "I have no cause to be humbled, that I am no more affected with the things of religion than I am; I have no reason to be ashamed, that I have no greater exercises of love to God, and sorrow for sin, and gratitude for the mercies which I have received?" Who is there that will go and bless God, that he is affected *enough* with what he has read and heard of the wonderful love of God to worms and rebels in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher degree, because high affections are improper, and very unlovely in Christians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true religion?

Our text plainly speaks of great and high affections, when it speaks of *rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* Here the most superlative expressions are used, which language will afford. The scriptures often require us to exercise *very high* affections: thus in the first and great commandment of the law, there is an accumulation of expressions, as though words were wanting to express the *degree* in which we ought to *love* God; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with* ALL *thy* HEART, *with* ALL *thy* SOUL, *with* ALL *thy* MIND, *and with* ALL *thy* STRENGTH. So the saints are called upon to exercise high degrees of *joy: Rejoice*, says Christ to his disciples, *and be exceeding glad*, Matth. v. 12. So, Psal. lxviii. 3. *Let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.* In the book of Psalms, the saints are often called upon to *shout for joy:* and in Luke vi. 23. to *leap for joy.* So they are abundantly called upon to exercise high degrees of *gratitude* for mercies, to *praise God with all their hearts, with hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord, their souls magnifying the Lord, singing his praises, talking of his wondrous works, declaring his doings, &c.*

We find the most eminent saints in scripture often *professing* high affections. Thus the *psalmist* mentions his *love* as if it were *unspeakable;* Psal. cxix. 97. *O how love I thy law!* So he expresses a great degree of *hatred of sin;* Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred.* He also expresses a high degree of *sorrow for sin:* he

speaks of his sins *going over his head as a heavy burden, that was too heavy for him;* of *his roaring all the day, his moisture being turned into the drought of summer,* and *his bones being* as it were *broken* with sorrow. So he often expresses great degrees of spiritual *desires,* in a multitude of the strongest expressions which can be conceived of; such as *his longing, his soul thirsting as a dry and thirsty land where no water is, his panting, his flesh and heart crying out, his soul breaking for the longing it hath,* &c. He expresses the exercises of great and extreme *grief* for the sins of others, Psal. cxix. 136. *Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.* And ver. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.* He expresses high exercises of *joy,* Psal. xxi. 1. *The king shall joy in thy strength, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!* Psal. lxxi. 23. *My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I sing unto thee.* Psal. lxiii. 3—7. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life: my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee, while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. Because thou hast been my help; therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*

The *apostle Paul* expresses high exercises of affection. Thus he expresses the exercises of pity and concern for other's good, even to *anguish of heart;* a *great, fervent* and *abundant love, earnest* and *longing desires,* and *exceeding joy.* He speaks of the *exultation* and *triumphs* of his soul, his *earnest expectation* and *hope,* his *abundant tears,* and the *travails of his soul,* in pity, grief, earnest desires, godly jealousy, and fervent zeal, in many places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat. *John* the *Baptist* expressed *great joy,* John iii. 39. Those blessed women who anointed the body of Jesus, are represented as in a very high exercise of religious affection, at the resurrection of Christ. Matth. xxviii. 8. *And they departed from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy.*

It is often foretold of the *church* of God, in her future happy seasons on earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice; Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16. *They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.* Zech. ix. 9. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh,* &c. The same is represented in other places innumerable. And because high degrees of joy are the proper and and genuine fruits of the gospel of Christ, therefore the angel calls this gospel, *good tidings of great joy, that should be to all people,*

The *saints* and *angels* in *heaven*, who have religion in its highest perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate of God's perfections and works. They are all as a pure heavenly flame of fire, in their love, and in the greatness and strength of their joy and gratitude. Their praises are represented, *as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder*. Now the only reason why their affections are so much higher than the holy affections of saints on earth, is, they see things more according to their truth, and have their affections more conformed to the nature of things. And therefore if religious affections in men here below, are but of the same nature and kind with theirs, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to theirs in degree, the better; because therein they will be so much the more conformed to truth, as theirs are.

From these things it certainly appears, that the existence of religious affections, in a very high degree, is no evidence, that they are not such as have the nature of true religion. Therefore they greatly err, who condemn persons as enthusiasts, merely because their affections are very high.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that religious affections are of a spiritual and gracious nature, because they are great. It is very manifest by the holy scripture, our sure and infallible rule in things of this nature, that there are very high religious affections which are not spiritual and saving. The apostle Paul speaks of affections in the Galatians which had been exceedingly elevated, but yet he feared that they were vain, and had come to nothing, Gal. iv. 15. *Where is the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.* And in the 11th verse he tells them, *he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain.* So the children of Israel were greatly affected with God's mercy to them, when they had seen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the red sea, where they *sang God's praise;* though they soon forgat his works.—They were greatly affected again, at mount Sinai, when they saw the marvellous manifestations God made of himself there; and seemed mightily engaged in their minds, and with great forwardness made answer, when God proposed his holy covenant to them, saying, *All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient.* But how soon was there an end to all this mighty forwardness and engagedness of affection? How quickly were they turned aside after other gods, rejoicing and shouting around their golden calf? Great multitudes who were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, were elevated to a high degree, and made a mighty stir when Jesus very soon after entered into Jerusalem, exceedingly magnifying Christ, as though

the ground were not good enough for the ass he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut down branches of palm trees, and strewed them in the way; yea, they pulled off their garments, and spread them; and cried with loud voices, *Hosanna to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest;* so as to make the whole city ring again, and put all into an uproar. We learn by the evangelist John, that the reason why the people made this ado, was because they were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus, John xii. 18. This vast multitude crying *Hosanna*, gave occasion to the Pharisees to say, *Behold, the world is gone after him*, John xii. 19,—but Christ had at that time but few true disciples. And how quickly was this fervour at an end? All is extinct when this Jesus stands bound, with a mock robe and a crown of thorns, to be derided, spit upon, scourged, condemned, and executed. Indeed there was a great and loud outcry concerning him, among the multitude then, as well as before, but of a very different kind: it is not then *Hosanna, hosanna*, but *Crucify, crucify*:—In a word, it is the concurring voice of all orthodox divines, that there may be religious affections raised to a very high degree, and yet nothing of true religion.*

SECT. II.

It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body.

All affections whatsoever have, in some respect or degree, an effect on the body. As was observed before, such is our nature, and such are the laws of union of soul and body, that the mind can have no lively or vigorous exercise, without some effect upon the body. So subject is the body to the mind, and so much do its fluids, especially the animal spirits, attend the motions and exercises of the mind, that there cannot be so much as an intense thought, without an effect upon them. Yea, it is questionable, whether an embodied soul ever so much as thinks one thought, or has any exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding motion or alteration of the fluids, in some part of the body. But universal experience shews, that the exercise of the affections have, in a special manner, a tendency to some sensible effect upon the body. And if all affections have some effect on the body, we may then well suppose, the greater those affections, and the

* Mr. STODDARD observes, "That common affections are sometimes stronger than saving." *Guide to Christ*, p. 21.

more vigorous their exercises are, (other circumstances being equal) the greater will be the effect on the body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very *great* and strong exercises of the affections should have *great* effects on the body. And therefore, seeing there are very great affections, both common and spiritual, hence it is not to be wondered at, that great effects on the body should arise from both these kinds of affections. And consequently these effects are no signs, that the affections they arise from, are of one kind or the other.

Great effects on the body certainly are no sure evidences that affections are spiritual; for we see them oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is no way concerned in them. And if great affections about things *purely natural* may have these effects, I know not by what rule we should determine, that high affections about *religious things*, which arise in like manner from nature, cannot have the like effect.

Nor, on the other hand, do I know of any rule to determine, that gracious affections, when raised as high as any natural affections, with equally strong and vigorous exercises, cannot have a great effect on the body. No such rule can be drawn from *reason;* I know of no reason, why a being affected with a view of God's glory should not cause the body to faint, as well as being affected with a view of Solomon's glory. And no such rule has as yet been produced from the *scripture:* none has ever been found in all the late controversies about things of this nature. There is a great power in spiritual affections; we read of the *power which worketh in christians**, and of the spirit of God being in them as the *Spirit of power*†, and of the effectual *working of his power* in them‡, yea, of the working of God's *mighty power* in them||. But man's nature is weak: flesh and blood are represented in scripture as exceeding weak; and particularly with respect to its unfitness for great, spiritual, and heavenly operations and exercises. (Matth. xxvi. 41. 1 Cor. xv. 43. and 50.) The text prefixed to this discourse speaks of *joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* And who that considers what man's nature is, and what the nature of the affections are, can reasonably doubt but that such unutterable and glorious joys, may be too great and mighty for weak dust and ashes, so as to be considerably overbearing to it? It is evident by the scripture, that discoveries of God's glory, when given in a great degree, have a tendency, by affecting the mind, to overbear the body. The scripture teaches us, that if these views should be given to such a degree, as they are given in heaven, the weak frame of the body could not subsist under it, and that no man can, in that manner, see God and live.

* Eph. ii. 7. † 2 Tim. i. 7. ‡ Eph. iii. 7. 20. || Eph. i. 19.

The knowledge which the saints have of God's beauty and glory in this world, and those holy affections that arise from it, are of the same nature and kind with what the saints are the subjects of in heaven, differing only in degree and circumstances. What God gives them here, is a *foretaste* of heavenly happiness, and an *earnest* of their future inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this earnest, or say he shall give so much of the inheritance, such a part of the future reward, as an earnest of the whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his word, that the whole reward is such, that it would at once destroy the body, is it not too bold a thing for us to set bounds to the sovereign God; or to say, that in giving the earnest of this reward, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the strength of the body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

The psalmist, speaking of his vehement religious affections, and of an effect in his flesh or body, besides what was in his soul, expressly distinguishes one from the other, Psal. lxxxiv. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my* HEART *and my* FLESH *crieth out for the living God.* Here is a plain distinction between the *heart* and the *flesh*, as being each affected. So Psal. lxiii. 1. *My* SOUL *thirsteth for thee, my* FLESH *longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* Here also is an evident, designed distinction, between the soul and the flesh.

The prophet Habakkuk speaks of his body being overborn by a sense of the majesty of God, Hab. iii. 16. *When I heard my belly trembled: my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself.* So the psalmist, Psal. cxix. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee.*

That such ideas of God's glory as are given sometimes even in this world, have a tendency to overbear the body, is evident, because the scripture gives us an account, that this has actually been the effect of those external manifestations which God made of himself to some of the saints, in order to give them an idea of his majesty and glory. Daniel, giving an account of an external representation of the glory of Christ, says, Dan. x. 8. *And there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength.* And the apostle John, giving an account of a similar manifestation made to him, says, Rev. i. 17. *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.* It is in vain to say here, that these were only external manifestations of the glory of Christ; for though this be true, yet the use of these representations, was to give an idea of the thing represented, the true divine glory and majesty of Christ. They were made use of only as significations of this spiritual glory, and

thus undoubtedly they received and improved them, and were affected by them. According to the end for which God intended these outward signs, they received by them a great and lively apprehension of the real glory and majesty of God's nature, of which they were signs; and thus were greatly affected, their souls swallowed up, and their bodies overborn. And, I think, they are very bold and daring, who will say that God cannot, or shall not give the like affecting apprehensions of the same real glory of his nature to none of his saints, without the intervention of such external shadows.

Before I leave this head, I would farther observe, that it is plain the scripture often makes use of bodily effects to express the strength of holy and spiritual affections; such as *trembling**, *groaning*†, *being sick*‡, *crying out*‖, *panting*§, *and fainting***. Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative expressions to represent the degree of affection; yet I hope all will allow, that they are *suitable* figures to represent the high degree of those spiritual affections; which I see not how they would be, if those spiritual affections are the proper effects, and sad tokens of false affections, and the delusion of the devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make use of things which are very alien from spiritual affections, and are shrewd marks of the hand of Satan, and smell strong of the bottomless pit, as beautiful figures, to represent the high degree of holy and heavenly affections.

SECT. III.

It is no sign that affections are truly gracious, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent and abundant in talking of religious things.

There are many persons, who, if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being so full of talk, is with them a sufficient ground to condemn them as Pharisees, and ostentatious hypocrites. On the other hand, there are many who, if they see this effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true children of God, under the saving influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great evidence of a new creature. *Such an one's mouth, say they, is now opened: he used to be slow to speak; but now he is full and free: he is free now to open his heart, and tell his expe-*

* Psal. cxix. 120. Ezra ix. 4. Isa. lxvi. 2, 5. Hab. iii 16. † Rom. viii. 26. ‡ Cant. ii. 5 and v. 8. ‖ Psal. lxxxiv. 2. § Psal. xxxviii. 10. and xlii. 1. and cxix. 131. ** Psal. lxxxiv. 2 and cxix. 81.

The knowledge which the saints have of God's beauty and glory in this world, and those holy affections that arise from it, are of the same nature and kind with what the saints are the subjects of in heaven, differing only in degree and circumstances. What God gives them here, is a *foretaste* of heavenly happiness, and an *earnest* of their future inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this earnest, or say he shall give so much of the inheritance, such a part of the future reward, as an earnest of the whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his word, that the whole reward is such, that it would at once destroy the body, is it not too bold a thing for us to set bounds to the sovereign God; or to say, that in giving the earnest of this reward, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the strength of the body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

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the clouds, saying, *Never man spake like this man!* being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these things come to, in the greater part of them?

A person may be over full of talk of his own experiences; falling upon it every where, and in all companies; and when so, it is rather a dark sign than a good one. A tree that is over full of leaves, seldom bears much fruit. And a cloud, though to appearance very pregnant and full of water, if it brings with it over much wind, seldom affords much rain to the dry and thirsty earth; which very thing the Holy Spirit is pleased several times to make use of, to represent a great shew of religion with the mouth, without answerable fruit in the life, Prov. xxv. 14. *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain.* And the apostle Jude, speaking of some in the primitive times, that *crept in unawares* among the saints, and having a great shew of religion, were for a while not suspected, *These are clouds* (says he) *without water, carried about of winds*, Jude ver. 4. and 12. And the apostle Peter, speaking of the same, says, 2 Pet. ii. 17. *These are clouds without water, carried with a tempest.* False affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to declare themselves, than true: because it is the nature of false religion, to affect shew and observation; as it was with the Pharisees*.

SECT. IV.

It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not excite them by their own endeavours.

There are many in these days, who condemn all affections which are excited in a way that seems not to be the natural con-

* That famous experimental divine Mr. Shepard, says, "A Pharisee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end; when simplicity walks through the town unseen. Hence a man will sometimes covertly commend himself, (and *myself* ever comes in,) and tells you a long story of conversion: and an hundred to one if some lie or other slip not out with it. Why, the secret meaning is, *I pray admire me.* Hence complain of wants and weaknesses: *pray think what a broken-hearted Christian I am.*" *Parab. of the ten virgins*, Part I. page 179, 180.

And holy Mr. FLAVEL says thus, "O reader, if thy heart were right with God, and thou didst not cheat thyself with a vain profession, thou wouldst have frequent business with God, which thou wouldst be loth thy dearest friend, or the wife of thy bosom should be privy to. *Non est religio, ubi omnia patent.* Religion doth not lie open to all, to the eyes of men. Observed duties maintain our credit, but secret duties maintain our life. It was the saying of an heathen, about his secret correspondency with his friend, *What need the world to be acquainted with it? Thou and I are theatre enough to each other.* There are inclosed pleasures in religion, which none but renewed spiritual souls do feelingly understand." FLAVEL's *Touchstone of Sincerity*, chap. II. sect. 2.

sequence of the faculties and principles of human nature, in such circumstances, and under such means; but to be from the influence of some extrinsic and supernatural power upon their minds. How greatly has the doctrine of the inward experience or sensible perceiving of the immediate power and operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late? They say, the manner of the Spirit of God, is to co-operate in a silent, secret, and undiscernible way with the use of means, and our own endeavours; so that there is no distinguishing by sense, between the influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural operations of the faculties of our own minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the saving influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent improvement of the appointed means of grace, is unreasonable presumption. And to expect that the Spirit of God will savingly operate upon their minds, without the use of means, as subservient to the effect, is enthusiastical. It is also undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the manner and circumstances of his operations, and that sometimes he operates in a way more secret and gradual, and from smaller beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a power, entirely different from and beyond our power—or the power of all means and instruments, and above the power of nature—which is requisite in order to the production of saving grace in the heart, according to the general profession of the country; then certainly, it is in no wise unreasonable to suppose, that this effect should very frequently be produced after such a manner, as to make it very manifest and sensible, that it is so. If grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious operation of an extrinsic agent, or divine efficient out of ourselves, why is it unreasonable to suppose, it should seem to be so, to them who are the subjects of it? Is it a strange thing, that it should seem to be as it is? When grace in the heart indeed is not produced by our strength, nor is the effect of the natural power of our own faculties, or any means or instruments, but is properly the workmanship and production of the Spirit of the Almighty, is it a strange thing, that it should seem to them who are subjects of it, agreeable to truth, and not contrary to truth? If persons tell of effects that seem to them not to be from [illegible] power or operation of their minds, but from the [illegible]er of some other agent, should it at [illegible] once [illegible] ure evidence of their being under a [illegible] to them to be as they are? For is it [illegible]de: it is looked upon as a clear [illegible] and affections that many persons [illegible]use, because they *seem* to them

to be from that cause. They declare that what they are conscious of, seems to them evidently not to be from themselves, but from the mighty power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine that what they experience is not from the Spirit God, but from themselves, or from the devil. Thus unreasonably are multitudes treated at this day, by their neighbours.

If it be indeed so, as the scripture abundantly teaches, that grace in the soul is so the effect of God's power, that it is fitly compared to those effects, which are farthest from being owing to any strength in the subject, such as *generation*, or *a being begotten*, and *resurrection*, or *a being raised from the dead*, and *creation*, or *a being brought out of nothing into being*, and that it is an effect wherein the mighty power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding greatness of his power manifested*; then what account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in so great a work of his power, should so carefully hide his power, that the subjects of it should be able to discern nothing of it? or what reason or revelation have any to determine that he does so? If we may judge by the scripture, this is not agreeable to God's manner, in his operations and dispensations; but on the contrary, it is God's manner, in the great works of his power and mercy, to make his hand visible, and his power conspicuous, and men's dependence on him most evident, that no flesh should glory in his presence†, that God alone might be exalted‡, and that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of man§, and that Christ's power might be manifested in our weakness‖, and none might say, mine own hand hath saved me¶. So it was in most of those temporal salvations which God wrought for Israel of old, which were types of the salvation of his people from their spiritual enemies. So, in the redemption of Israel from their Egyptian bondage; he redeemed them with a strong hand, and an outstretched arm; and that his power might be the more conspicuous, he suffered Israel to be brought into the most helpless and forlorn circumstances. So, in the great redemption by Gideon; God would have his army diminished to a handful, and they without any other arms, than trumpets, and lamps, and earthen pitchers. So, in the deliverance of Israel from Goliah, by a stripling, with a sling and a stone. So it was in that great work of God, his calling the Gentiles, after that the world by wisdom knew not God, and all the endeavours of philosophers to reform the world had failed, and it was become abundant evident that the world had no effectual help but the mighty power of God.

* Eph. i. 17—20. † 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29. ‡ Is. i. 11—17. § 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‖ 2 Cor. xii. 9. ¶ Judg vii. 2.

And so it was in most of the conversions of particular persons recorded in the history of the New Testament: they were not affected in that silent, secret, gradual, and insensible manner, which is now insisted on; but with those manifest evidences of a supernatural power, wonderfully and suddenly causing a great change, which in these days are looked upon as certain signs of delusion and enthusiasm.

The apostle in Eph. i. 18, 19. speaks of God enlightening the minds of Christians, and so bringing them to believe in Christ, to the end that they *might know* the exceeding greatness of his power to them who believe. The words are, *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power*, &c. Now when the apostle speaks of their being thus the subjects of his power, in their enlightening and effectual calling, to the end that they might *know* what his mighty power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing else, than *that they might know by experience.* But if the saints know this power by *experience*, then they feel it, discern it, and are conscious of it; as sensibly distinguishable from the natural operations of their own minds. But this is not agreeable to a notion of God operating so secretly, and undiscernibly, that it cannot be known they are the subjects of any extrinsic influence at all, otherwise than as they may argue it from scripture *assertions;* which is a different thing from knowing it by experience. So that it is very unreasonable and unscriptural, to determine that affections are not from the gracious operations of God's Spirit, because they are sensibly not from the persons themselves who are the subjects of them.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that affections are gracious, that they are not purposely produced by those who are the the subjects of them, or that they arise in their minds in a manner which they cannot account for.

There are some who make this an argument in their own favour, when speaking of what they have experienced: "I am sure I did not make it myself: it was a fruit of no contrivance or endeavour of mine; it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might have the world for it, I cannot make it again when I please." And hence they determine, that what they have experienced, must be from the mighty influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a saving nature; but very ignorantly, and without grounds. What they have experienced, may indeed not be from themselves directly, but may be from the operation of an invisible agent, some spirit besides their own: but it does not thence fol-

low, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other spirits who have influence on the minds of men, besides the Holy Ghost. We are directed not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God. There are many false spirits, exceeding busy with men, who often transform themselves into angels of light, and in many wonderful ways, with great subtlety and power, mimic the operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of satan's operations, which are very distinguishable from the voluntary exercises of men's own minds. They are so, in those dreadful and horrid suggestions, and blasphemous injections with which he follows many persons; also, in vain and fruitless frights and terrors, of which he is the author. And the power of satan may be as immediate, and as evident in false comforts and joys, as in terrors and horrid suggestions; and oftentimes is so in fact. It is not in men's power to put themselves into such raptures as those of the Anabaptists in Germany, and many other raving enthusiasts like them.

Besides, it is to be considered, that persons may have impressions on their minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil spirit, but from a common influence of the Spirit of God: and the subjects of such impressions, may be of the number of those we read of, Heb. vi. 4, 5. *that are once enlightened, and taste of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;* and yet may be wholly unacquainted with those *better things that accompany salvation.* And where neither a good nor evil spirit have any immediate hand, persons, especially such as are of a weak and vapoury habit of body, and the brain easily susceptive of impressions, may have strange apprehensions and imaginations, and strong affections attending them, unaccountably arising, which are not voluntarily produced by themselves. We see that such persons are liable to such impressions, about temporal things; and there is equal reason, why they should about spiritual things. As a person asleep has dreams, of which he is not the voluntary author; so may such persons, in like manner, be the subjects of involuntary impressions, when they are awake.

SECT. V.

It is no sign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come to the mind in a remarkable manner with texts of scripture.

It is no sign that affections are *not* gracious, that they are occasioned by scriptures *so* coming to mind; provided it be the *scripture* itself—or the truth which the scripture so brought contains and teaches—that is the foundation of the affection, and not merely or mainly the sudden and unusual *manner* of its coming to the mind.

But on the other hand, neither is it any sign that affections *are* gracious, that they arise on occasion of scriptures brought suddenly and wonderfully to the mind; whether those affections be fear or hope, joy or sorrow, or any other. Some seem to look upon *this* as a good evidence that their affections are saving, especially if the affections excited are hope or joy, or any other which are pleasing and delightful. They will mention it as an evidence that all is right, that their experience *came with the word*, and will say, "There were such and such sweet promises brought to my mind: they came suddenly, as if they were spoke to me: I had no hand in bringing such a text to my own mind; I was not thinking of any thing leading to it; it came all at once, so that I was surprised. I had not thought of it a long time before; I did not know at first that it was scripture; I did not remember that ever I had read it." And it may be they will add, "One scripture came flowing in after another, and so texts all over the Bible, the most sweet and pleasant, and the most apt and suitable, which could be devised; and filled me full as I could hold: I could not but stand and admire: the tears flowed; I was full of joy, and could not doubt any longer." And thus they think they have undoubted evidence, that their affections must be from God, and of the right kind, and their state good: but without any good grounds. How come they by any such *rule*, as that if any affections or experiences arise with promises, and comfortable texts of scripture, unaccountably brought to mind, without their recollection, or if a great number of sweet texts follow one another in a chain, that this is a certain evidence their experiences are saving? Where is any such rule to be found in the Bible, the great and only sure directory in things of this nature?

What deceives many of the less knowing and considerate sort of people, in this matter, seems to be this; that the scripture is the word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect: and therefore, those experiences which come

from the scripture must be right. But then it should be considered, affections may arise on *occasion* of the scripture, and not properly come *from*, as the genuine fruit of the scripture, but from an abuse of it. All that can be argued from the purity and perfection of the word of God, with respect to experiences, is this, that those experiences which are *agreeable* to the word of God, are right, and cannot be otherwise; and not that those affections must be right, which arise *on occasion* of the word of God coming to the mind.

What evidence is there that the devil cannot bring texts of scripture to the mind, and misapply them, to deceive persons?—There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the power of Satan. It is no work of such mighty power, to bring sounds or letters to persons' minds. If Satan has power to bring *any* words or sounds at all to persons' minds, he may have power to bring words contained in the Bible. There is no higher sort of power required in men, to make the sounds which express the words of a text of scripture, than to make the sounds which express the words of an idle story or song. And so the same power in Satan which is sufficient to renew one of those in the mind, is sufficient to renew the other: the different signification, which depends wholly on custom, alters not the case, as to ability to make or revive the sounds or letters. Or will any suppose, that texts of scripture are such sacred things, that the devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither into the wilderness, into an high mountain, and to a pinnacle of the temple, is not afraid to touch the scripture, and abuse that for his own purposes. For, at the same time that he was so bold with Christ, he brought one scripture and another to deceive and tempt him. And if Satan did presume, and was permitted to put Christ himself in mind of texts of scripture, to tempt *him*, what reason have we to determine, that he dare not, or will not be permitted, to put wicked men in mind of texts of scripture, to tempt and deceive *them*? And if Satan may thus abuse one text of scripture, so he may another. Its being a very excellent place of scripture, a comfortable and precious promise, alters not the case, as to his courage or ability. And if he can bring one comfortable text to the mind, so he may a thousand; and may choose out such scriptures as tend most to serve his purpose. He may heap up scripture promises, tending, according to the perverse application he makes of them, wonderfully to remove the rising doubts, and to confirm the false joy and confidence of a poor deluded sinner.

We know the devil's instruments, corrupt and heretical teachers, can and do pervert the scripture, to their own and others

damnation, 2 Pet. iii. 16. We see they have the free use of scripture, in every part of it; there is no text so precious and sacred, but they are permitted to abuse it, to the eternal ruin of souls; and there are no weapons they use, with which they do more execution. There is no manner of reason to determine, that the devil is not permitted thus to abuse the scripture, as well as his instruments. For when the latter do it, they do it as his instruments, through his instigation and influence: and doubtless the devil's servants do but follow their master, and do the same work that he does himself.

And as the devil can abuse the scripture, to deceive and destroy men, so may men's own folly and corruptions. Men's own hearts are deceitful like the devil, and use the same means to deceive. So that it is evident, that persons may have high affections of hope and jōy, arising on occasion of texts of scripture, yea precious promises coming suddenly and remarkably to their minds, as though they were spoken to them, yea a great multitude of such texts following one another in a wonderful manner; and yet all this be no argument that these affections are divine, or that they are any other than the effects of Satan's delusions.

I would further observe, that persons may have raised and joyful affectiōns, which may come *with* the word of God, and not only so, but *from* the word, and those affections not be from Satan, nor yet properly from the corruptions of their own hearts, but from some influence of the Spirit of God with the word, and yet have nothing of the nature of *true* and *saving* religion in them. Thus the stony ground hearers had great joy from the word; yea, arising from the word, as growth from a seed; and their affections had, in their appearance, a very great and exact resemblance with those represented by the growth on the good ground —the difference not appearing, until it was discovered by the consequences in a time of trial—and yet there was no *saving* religion in these affections‖.

SECT. VI.

It is no evidence that religious Affections are saving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an appearance of love in them.

There are no professing Christians who pretend, that this is an argument against the truth and saving nature of religious affec-

‖ Mr. STODDARD, in his "Guide to Christ," speaks of it as a common thing, for persons while in a natural condition, and before they have ever truly accepted of Christ, to have scripture promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing; which they take as tokens of God's love, and hope that God has accepted them; and so are confident of their good estate, p. 8, 9. Impression anno 1735.

tions. But on the other hand, there are some who suppose, it is a good evidence that affections are from the sanctifying and saving influences of the Holy Ghost. Their argument is, that *Satan cannot love;* this affection being directly contrary to the devil, whose very nature is enmity and malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excellent, heavenly and divine, than a spirit of true Christian love to God and men; it is more excellent than *knowledge*, or *prophecy*, or *miracles*, or *speaking with the tongue of men and angels*. It is the chief of the graces of God's Spirit, and the life, essence, and sum of all true religion; and that by which we are most conformed to heaven, and most contrary to hell and the devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no counterfeits of it. It may be observed, that the more excellent any thing is, the more will be the counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more counterfeits of silver and gold, than of iron and copper: there are many false diamonds and rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common stones? Though the more excellent things are, the more difficult it is to make any thing like them, in their essential nature and internal virtue; yet the more manifold will the counterfeits be, and the more will art and subtilty be exercised and displayed, in an exact imitation of the outward appearance. Thus there is the greatest danger of being cheated in buying medicines that are most excellent and sovereign, though it be most difficult to imitate them, with any thing of the like value and virtue, and their counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian virtues and graces; the subtilty of Satan, and men's deceitful hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest repute. So there are perhaps no graces that have more counterfeits than love and humility; these being virtues wherein the beauty of a true Christian especially appears.

But with respect to love, it is plain by the scripture, that persons may have a kind of religious love, and yet have no saving grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians whose love will not continue, and so shall fail of salvation, Matth. xxiv. 12, 13. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* Which latter words plainly show, that those spoken of before, whose love shall not *endure to the end*, but *wax cold*, should not be saved. Persons may seem to have love to God and Christ, yea to have very strong and violent affections of this nature, and yet have no grace. This was evidently the case with many graceless Jews, such as cried Jesus up so high, following him day and night, without meat, drink, or sleep; such as said, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, and cried *Hosan-*

*na to the son of David**.—The apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his days, who had a counterfeit love to Christ, in Eph. vi. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ* IN SINCERITY. The last word, in the original, signifies *in incorruption;* which shews, that the apostle was sensible there were many who had a kind of love to Christ, which was not pure and spiritual.

So also Christian love to the people of God may be counterfeited. It is evident by the scripture, that there may be strong affections of this kind, without saving grace; as there were in the Galatians towards the apostle Paul, when they were ready to pluck out their eyes and give them to him; although the apostle expresses his fear that their affections were coming to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them labour in vain. Gal. iv. 11, 15.

SECT. VII.

Persons having religious affections of many kinds, accompanying one another, is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious affections or no.

Though false religion is wont to be maimed and monstrous, and not to have that entireness and symmetry of parts, which is to be seen in true religion; yet there may be a great variety of false affections together, that may resemble gracious affections.

It is evident that there are counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affections; as of *love to God*, and *love to the brethren*, as just now observed; so of *godly sorrow for sin*, as in Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, and the children of Israel in the wilderness†; and of the *fear of God*, as in the Samaritans, *who feared the Lord, and served their own Gods* at the same time, (2 Kings xvii. 32, 33.) and those enemies of God we read of, Psal. lxvi. 3. who *through the greatness of God's power, submit themselves to him*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *lie unto him*, i. e. yield a counterfeit reverence and submission: so of a *gracious gratitude*, as in the children of Israel, who sang God's praise at the Red sea, (Psal. cvi. 12.) and Naa-

* Agreeable to this Mr. STODDARD observes, in his *Guide to Christ*, that some sinners have pangs of affection, and give an account that they find a spirit of love to God, and of their aiming at the glory of God, having that which has a great resemblance of saving grace; and that sometimes their common affections are stronger than saving. And supposes, that sometimes natural men may have such violent pangs of false affection to God, that they may think themselves willing to be damned. Page 21. and 65.

† Exod. ix. 27. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. and xxvi. 21. 1 Kings xxi. 27. Numb. xiv. 29, 40.

man the Syrian, after his miraculous cure of his leprosy, (2 Kings v. 15, &c.)

So of *spiritual joy*, as in the stony-ground hearers, (Matth. xiii. 20.) and particularly many of John the Baptist's hearers, (John v. 35.) So of *zeal*, as in Jehu, (2 Kings x. 6.) and in Paul before his conversion, (Gal. i. 14—Phil. iii. 6.) and the unbelieving Jews, (Acts xxii. 3—Rom. x. 2.) So graceless persons may have earnest religious *desires*, which may be like Balaam's desires, which he expresses under an extraordinary view of the happy state of God's people, as distinguished from all the rest of the world, (Numb. xxiii. 9, 10.) They may also have a strong *hope* of eternal life, as the Pharisees had.

And as men, while in a state of nature, are capable of a resemblance of all kinds of religious affection, so nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in fact, abundantly evinces that it is thus very often. Commonly, when false affections are raised high, many of them attend each other. The multitude that attended Christ into Jerusalem, after that great miracle of raising Lazarus, seem to be moved with many religious affections at once, and all in a high degree. They seem to be filled with *admiration;* and there was a shew of high affection of *love;* also a great degree of *reverence*, in their laying their garments on the ground for Christ to tread upon. They express great *gratitude* to him, for the great and good works he had wrought, praising him with loud voices for his salvation; and earnest *desires* of the coming of God's kingdom, which they supposed Jesus was now about to set up; and they shewed great *hopes* and raised expectations of it, *expecting it would immediately appear*. Hence they were filled with *joy*, by which they were so animated in their acclamations, as to make the whole city ring again with the noise of them; and they appeared great in their *zeal* and forwardness to attend Jesus, and assist him without further delay, now in the time of the great feast of the *passover*, to set up his kingdom.

It is easy, from the nature of the affections, to give an account why, when one affection is raised very high, that it should excite others; especially if the affection which is raised high, be that of counterfeit *love*, as it was in the multitude who cried *Hosanna*. This will naturally draw many other affections after it. For, as was observed before, love is the chief of the affections, and as it were the fountain of them. Let us suppose a person, who has been for some time in great exercise and terror through fear of hell; his heart weakened with distress and dreadful apprehensions, upon the brink of despair; and who is all at once delivered, by being firmly made to believe, through some delusion of Satan, that God has pardoned him, and accepts him as the object of his

dear love, and promises him eternal life. Suppose also, that this is done through some vision, or strong imagination suddenly excited in him, of a person with a beautiful countenance smiling on him—with arms open, and with blood dropping down—which the person conceives to be Christ, without any other enlightening of the understanding to give a view of the spiritual, divine excellency of Christ and his fulness, and of the way of salvation revealed in the gospel. Or, suppose some voice or words coming as if they were spoken to him, such as these, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;* or, *Fear not, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*, which he takes to be immediately spoken by God to him, though there was no preceding acceptance of Christ, or closing of the heart with him. I say, if we should suppose such a case, what various passions would naturally crowd at once, or one after another, into such a person's mind? It is easy to be accounted for, from the mere principles of nature, that a person's heart, on such an occasion, should be raised up to the skies with transports of joy, and be filled with fervent affection to that imaginary God or Redeemer, who, he supposes, has thus rescued him from the jaws of such dreadful destruction, and received him with such endearment, as a peculiar favourite. Is it any wonder that now he should be filled with admiration and gratitude, his mouth should be opened, and be full of talk about what he has experienced? That, for a while, he should think and speak of scarce any thing else, should seem to magnify that God who has done so much for him, call upon others to rejoice with him, appear with a cheerful countenance, and talk with a loud voice? That, however, before his deliverance, he was full of quarrellings against the justice of God, now it should be easy for him to submit to God, own his unworthiness, cry out against himself, appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his feet as tame as a lamb; now confessing his unworthiness, and crying out, *Why me? Why me?* Thus Saul, who, when Samuel told him that God had appointed him to be king, makes answer, *Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?* Much in the language of David, the true saint, 2 Sam. vii. 18. *Who am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* Is it to be wondered at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy circumstances, and that he should love all such as esteem and admire him and what he has experienced? That he should have violent zeal against all who make nothing of such things, be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim war with all who are not of his party? That he should now glory in his sufferings,

and be very much for condemning and censuring all who seem to doubt, or make any difficulty of these things? And, while the warmth of his affections last, that he should be mighty forward to take pains, and to deny himself, and to promote the interest of a party favouring such things? Or that he should seem earnestly desirous to increase the number of them, as the Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one *proselyte**? I might mention many other things, which will naturally arise in such circumstances. He must have but slightly considered human nature, who thinks that such things as these cannot arise in this manner, without any supernatural interposition of divine power.

As from true divine love flow all Christian affections, so from counterfeit love naturally flow other false affections. In both cases, love is the fountain, and the other affections are the streams. The various faculties, principles, and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain. If there be sweet water in the fountain, sweet water will flow out into those various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poisonous, then poisonous streams will also flow into all those channels. So that the channels and streams will be alike, corresponding one with another; but the great difference will lie in the nature of the water. Or man's nature may be compared to a tree with many branches, coming from one root: if the sap in the root be good, there will also be good sap distributed throughout the branches, and the fruit brought forth will be good and wholesome; but if the sap in the root and stock be poisonous, so it will be in many branches, and the fruit will be deadly. The tree in both cases may be alike; there may be an exact resemblance in shape; but the difference is found only in eating the fruit. It is thus, in some measure at least, oftentimes between saints and hypocrites. There is sometimes a very great similitude between true and false experiences in their appearance, and in what is expressed by the subjects of them; the difference between them is much like the difference between the dreams of Pharaoh's chief butler and baker. They seemed to be much alike, insomuch that when Joseph interpreted the chief butler's dream, that he should be delivered from his imprisonment, and restored to the king's favour, and his honourable office in the palace, the chief baker had raised hopes and expectations, and told his dream also. But he was wofully disappointed; for though his dream was so much like the happy and well-boding dream of his companion, yet it was quite contrary in its issue.

* "Associating with godly men does not prove that a man has grace: Ahithophel was David's companion. Sorrows for the afflictions of the church, and desires for the conversion of souls, do not prove it. These things may be found in carnal men, and so can be no evidences of grace. (Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion, p. 82.)

SECT. VIII.

Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections, that comforts and joys seem to follow in a certain order.

Many persons seem to be prejudiced against affections and experiences that come in such a method as has been much insisted on by many divines; first, such awakenings, fears and awful apprehensions followed with such legal humblings, in a sense of total sinfulness and helplessness, and then, such and such light and comfort. They look upon all such schemes, laying down such methods and steps, to be of men's devising: and particularly if high affections of joy follow great distress and terror, it is made by many an argument against those affections. But such prejudices and objections are without reason or scripture. Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers persons from a state of sin and exposedness to eternal destruction, he should give them some considerable sense of the evil from which he delivers; that they may be delivered sensibly, and understand their own salvation, and know something of what God does for them. As men that are saved are in two exceeding different states, first a state of condemnation, and then in a state of justification and blessedness; and as God, in the work of salvation, deals with them suitably to their intelligent nature; so it seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's wisdom, that men who are saved, should be in these two states *sensibly;* that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme necessity, and afterwards of Christ's sufficiency and God's mercy through him.

And that it is God's manner of dealing with men, to *lead them into a wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them,* and so to order it, that they shall be brought into distress, and made to see their own helplessness, and absolute dependence on his power and grace, before he appears to work any great deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the scripture. Then is God wont to *repent himself for his professing people, when their strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left:* and when they are brought to see that their false gods cannot help them, and that the rock in whom they trusted is vain, Deut. xxxii. 36, 37. Before God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were prepared for it, by being made to *see that they were in an evil case,* and *to cry unto God, because of their hard bondage,* Exod. ii. 23. and v. 19. And before God wrought that great deliverance for them at the Red sea, they were brought into great distress, the *wilderness had shut them in,* they could not turn to the right hand nor the left. The Red sea was before them, the great Egyptian

host behind, and they were brought to see that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up. Then God appeared, and turned their cries into songs. So before they were brought to their rest, and to enjoy the milk and honey of Canaan, God *led them through a great and terrible wilderness, that he might humble them, and teach them what was in their heart, and so do them good in their latter end*, Deut. viii. 2, 16. The woman that had the issue of blood twelve years, was not delivered, until she had first *spent all her living on earthly physicians, and could not be healed of any*, and so was left helpless, having no more money to spend. Then she came to the great Physician, without money or price, and was healed by him, Luke viii. 43, 44. Before Christ could answer the request of the woman of Canaan, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herself worthy to be called a dog; and then he shewed her mercy, and received her as a dear child, Matth. xv. 22, &c. The apostle Paul, before a remarkable deliverance, was *pressed out of measure above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life; but had the sentence of death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the dead*, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. There was first a great tempest, and the ship was covered with the waves, and just ready to sink, and the disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, *Lord, save us, we perish;* then the winds and seas were rebuked, and there was a great calm, Matth. viii. 24—26. The leper, before he was cleansed, must have his mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper lip, and was to acknowledge his great misery and utter uncleanness, by rending his clothes, and crying, *Unclean, unclean*, Lev. xiii. 45. And backsliding Israel, before God heals them, are brought to *acknowledge that they have sinned, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord;* to see that *they lie down in their shame, and that confusion covers them; that in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains*, and that God only can save them, Jer. iii. 23, 24, 25. Joseph, who was sold by his brethren, and therein was a type of Christ, brings his brethren into great perplexity and distress, to reflect on their sin, and to say, *we are verily guilty*, and at last to resign up themselves entirely into his hands for bondmen. Then he reveals himself to them, as their brother and their saviour.

If we consider those extraordinary manifestations which God made of himself to saints of old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a way which was *terrible*, and then by those things that were *comfortable*. So it was with Abraham; first, *a horror of great darkness fell upon him*, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet promises, Gen. xv. 12, 13. So it

was with Moses at Mount Sinai; first, God appeared to him in all the terrors of his dreadful majesty, so that Moses said, *I exceedingly fear and quake;* and then he made all his goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his name, *The Lord God gracious and merciful*, &c. So it was with Elijah; first, there is a stormy wind, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and then a still, small, sweet voice, 1 Kings xix. So it was with Daniel; he first saw Christ's countenance as lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable words as these, *O Daniel, a man greatly beloved*, Dan. x. So it was with the apostle John, Rev. i. There is an analogy observable in God's dispensations and deliverances which he works for his people, and the manifestation which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many things in scripture which more directly shew, that this is God's ordinary manner in working salvation for the souls of men; and in the manifestations he makes of himself and of his mercy in Christ, in the ordinary works of his grace on the hearts of sinners. The servant that owed his prince ten thousand talents, is first held to his debt. The king pronounces sentence of condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, that payment be made. Thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole debt to be just; and then forgives him all. The prodigal son spends all he has, is brought to see himself in extreme circumstances, to humble himself, and own his unworthiness, before he is relieved and feasted by his father, Luke xv. Old inveterate wounds must be searched to the bottom, in order to healing: and to this the scripture compares sin, the wound of the soul, and speaks of healing this wound without thus searching it, as vain and deceitful, Jer. viii. 11. Christ, in the work of his grace on the hearts of men, is compared to rain on the mown grass, grass that is cut down with a scythe, Psal. lxxii. 6. representing his refreshing, comforting influences on the wounded spirit. Our first parents, after they had sinned, were first terrified with God's majesty and justice, and had their sin, with its aggravations, set before them by their Judge, before they were relieved by the promise of the seed of the woman. Christians are spoken of as those *that have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them*, Heb. vi. 18. which representation implies great fear, and sense of danger preceding. To the like purpose, Christ is called *a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land*, Is. xxxii. And it seems to be the natural import of the word *gospel*, glad tidings, that it is news of deliverance and salvation,

after great fear and distress. There is all reason to suppose, that God deals with particular believers, as he dealt with his church, which he first made to hear his voice in the law, with terrible thunders and lightnings, and kept her under that schoolmaster, to prepare her for Christ; and then comforted her with the joyful sound of the gospel from Mount Sion. So likewise John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Christ, and prepare men's hearts for his reception, by shewing them their sins, and by bringing the self-righteous Jews off from their own righteousness, telling them that they were a *generation of vipers*, and shewing them their danger of *the wrath to come*, telling them that *the ax was laid at the root of the trees*, &c.

If it be indeed God's manner, (and I think the foregoing considerations shew that it undoubtedly is), before he gives men the comfort of a deliverance from their sin and misery, to give them a considerable sense of the greatness and dreadfulness of those evils, and their extreme wretchedness by reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that persons, at least oftentimes, while under these views, should have great distresses and terrible apprehensions of mind. For let it be considered what these evils are, of which they have a view; viz. great and manifold sins, against the infinite majesty of the great JEHOVAH, and the suffering of the fierceness of his wrath to all eternity. And we have many plain instances in scripture, of persons that have actually been brought into extreme distress by such convictions, before they have received saving consolations: as the multitude at Jerusalem, who were *pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* The apostle Paul *trembled and was astonished*, before he was comforted; and the jailor *called for a light, sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

From these things it appears to be very unreasonable in professing Christians, to make this an objection against the truth and spiritual nature of their comfortable and joyful affections, viz. that they follow such awful apprehensions and distresses as have been mentioned.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that comforts and joys are right, because they succeed great terrors, and amazing fears of hell*. This seems to be what some persons lay great weight upon; esteeming great terrors an evidence of a great work of

* MR. SHEPARD speaks of "men's being cast down as low as hell by sorrow and lying under chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come, and then raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; and yet not rent from lust; and such are objects of pity now, and are like to be the objects of terror at the great day."—*Parable of the Ten Virgins*, P. i. p. 125.

the law wrought on the heart, well preparing the way for solid comfort; not considering that terror, and a conviction of conscience, are different things. For though convictions of conscience often *cause* terror; yet they do not *consist* in it; and terrors often arise from other causes. Convictions of conscience, through the influences of God's Spirit, consist in conviction of sinfulness in heart and practice, and of the dreadfulness of sin, as committed against a God of terrible majesty, infinite holiness and hatred of sin, and strict justice in punishing of it. But some persons have frightful apprehensions of hell—a dreadful pit ready to swallow them up, flames just ready to lay hold of them, and devils all around ready to seize them—who at the same time seem to have very little proper light of conscience, really convincing them of their sinfulness of heart and life. The devil, if permitted, can terrify men as well as the Spirit of God. It is a work natural to him, and he has many ways of doing it in a manner tending to no good. He may exceedingly affright persons by impressing on them many external images and doleful ideas; as of a countenance frowning, a sword drawn, black clouds of vengeance, words of an awful doom pronounced,* hell gaping, devils coming, and the like—not in order to convince persons of things that are true, and revealed in the word of God, but, to lead them to vain and groundless determinations; as that their day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a resolution immediately to cut them off, &c.

And the terrors of some persons are very much owing to their particular constitution and temper. Nothing is more manifest, than that some persons are of such a temper and frame, that their imaginations are strongly impressed with every thing they are affected with; and the impression on the imagination re-acts on the affection, and raises that still higher. Affection and imagination act reciprocally one on another, till their affection is raised to a vast height; so the person is swallowed up, and loses all possession of himself.†

Some speak of a great sight they have of their wickedness, who really, when the matter comes to be well examined, are found to have little or no convictions of conscience. They speak of a

* "The way of the Spirit's working, when it does convince men, is by enlightening natural conscience. The Spirit does not work by giving a testimony, but by assisting natural conscience to do its work. Natural conscience is the instrument in the hand of God, to accuse, condemn, terrify, and to urge to duty. The spirit of God leads men into the consideration of their danger, and makes them to be affected therewith, Prov. xx. 27. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*" STODDARD'S *Guide to Christ*, page 44.

† The famous Mr. PERKINS distinguishes between "those sorrows that come through convictions of conscience, and melancholic passions arising only from mere imaginations, strongly conceived in the brain; which he says, usually come on a sudden, like lightning into a house." Vol. i. of his works, page 385.

dreadful hard heart, and how it lies like a stone; when truly they have none of those things in their minds or thoughts, wherein the hardness of their heart really consists. They speak of a dreadful load and sink of sin, a heap of black and loathsome filthiness within them; when, if the matter be carefully inquired into, they have not in view any thing wherein the corruption of nature does truly consist. Nor have they any thought of particular things wherein their hearts are sinfully defective, or fall short of what ought to be in them. And many think they have great convictions of their actual sins, who truly have none. They tell you how their sins are set in order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round, with a frightful appearance; when really they are not affected with the aggravations of any one of their sins.

And if persons have had great terrors which really have been from the awakening and convincing influences of the Spirit of God, it doth not thence follow that their terrors must needs issue in true comfort. The unmortified corruption of the heart may quench the Spirit of God, (after he has been striving,) by leading men to presumptuous, and self-exalting hopes and joys, as well as otherwise. It is not every woman who is really in travail, that brings forth a real child; but it may be a monstrous production, without the form or properties of human nature. Pharaoh's chief baker, after he had lain in the dungeon with Joseph, had a vision that raised his hopes, and he was lifted up out of the dungeon, as well as the chief butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if comforts and joys not only come after great terrors and awakenings, but with an appearance of *such* preparatory convictions and humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by *such* steps and in *such* a method, as has frequently been observable in true converts; this is no certain sign that the light and comforts which follow are true and saving; for these following reasons:—

First, As the devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those operations that are preparatory to grace. If Satan can counterfeit those effects of God's Spirit which are special, divine, and sanctifying; so that there shall be a very great resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those works of God's Spirit which are common, and of which men, while they are yet his own children, are the subjects. These works are in no wise so much above him as the other. There are no works of God that are so high and divine, above the powers of nature, and out of the reach of the power of all creatures, as those works of his Spirit whereby he forms the creature in his own image, and makes it to be a partaker of the divine nature. But if the

devil can be the author of such resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferior kind. And it is abundantly evident in fact, that there are false humiliations, and false submissions, as well as false comforts*. How far was Saul brought, though a very wicked man, and of a haughty spirit, when he (though a great king) was brought, in conviction of his sin, all in tears, weeping aloud, before David his own subject—one whom he had for a long time mortally hated, and openly treated as an enemy—crying out, *Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil?* And at another time, *I have sinned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly*, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. and chap. xxvi. 21. And yet Saul seems then to have had very little of the influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud monarch, in a pang of affection, was brought to humble himself so low, before a subject that he hated, there doubtless may be appearances of great conviction and humiliation in men, before God, while they yet remain enemies to him, and though they finally continue so. There is oftentimes in men, who are terrified through fears of hell, a great appearance of their being brought off from their own righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in *all* ways. They have only exchanged *some* ways of trusting in their own righteousness, for others that are more secret and subtle. Oftentimes a great degree of discouragement, as to many things they used to depend upon, is taken for humiliation: and that is called a submission to God, which is no absolute submission, but has some secret bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

Secondly, If the operations and effects of the Spirit of God, in the convictions and comforts of true converts, may be sophisticated, then the order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain order. If the devil can make A, B, and C, it is as easy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary order. The nature of divine things is harder for the devil to imitate, than their order. He cannot *exactly* imitate divine operations in their *nature*, though his counterfeits may be very much like them in external appearance:

* The venerable STODDARD observes, "A man may say, that now he can *justify God however he deals with him*, and not be brought off from his own righteousness; and that some men do justify God, from a partial conviction of the righteousness of their condemnation; conscience takes notice of their sinfulness, and tells them that they may be righteously damned; as Pharaoh, who justified God, Exod. ix. 27. And they give some kind of consent to it, but many times it does not continue, they have only a pang upon them, that usually dies away after a little time."—*Guide to Christ*, page 71.

but he can exactly imitate their *order*. When counterfeits are made, there is no divine power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no order or method of operations and experiences, is any certain sign of their divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain evidence of grace, which Satan cannot do, and which it is impossible should be brought to pass by any power short of divine.

Thirdly, We have no certain rule to determine how far God's own Spirit may go in those operations and convictions which in themselves are not spiritual and saving. There is no necessary connexion, in the nature of things, between any thing that a natural man may experience, while in a state of nature, and the saving grace of God's Spirit. And if there be no connexion in the nature of things, then there can be no known and certain connexion at all, unless it be by divine revelation. But there is no revealed certain connexion between a state of salvation, and any thing that a natural man can be the subject of, before he believes in Christ. God has revealed no certain connexion between salvation and any qualifications in men, but only grace and its fruits. And therefore we do not find any legal convictions, or comforts following these legal convictions, in any certain method or order, ever once mentioned in the scripture, as certain signs of grace, or things peculiar to the saints; although we do find gracious operations and effects themselves so mentioned thousands of times. Which should be enough with Christians, who are willing to have the word of God, rather than their own philosophy, and experiences, and conjectures, as their sufficient and sure guide in things of this nature.

Fourthly, Experience confirms that persons seeming to have convictions and comforts following one another in such a method and order, as is frequently observable in true converts, is no certain sign of grace*. I appeal to all those ministers in this land, who have had much occasion of dealing with souls, in the late extraordinary season, whether there has not been many who do not prove well, that have given a fair account of their experiences, and have seemed to be converted according to rule, *i. e.* with convictions and affections, succeeding distinctly and exactly, in that order and method, which has been ordinarily insisted on, as the order of the operations of the Spirit of God in conversion.

* Mr. STODDARD, who had much experience of things of this nature, long ago observed, that converted and unconverted men cannot be certainly distinguished by the account they give of their experience; the same relation of experiences being common to both. And that many persons have given a fair account of a work of conversion, that have carried well in the eye of the world for several years, but have not proved well at last. *Appeal to the Learned*, p. 75, 76.

But as this distinctness, as to method, is no certain sign that a person is converted; so, being without it is no evidence that a person is not converted. For, though it might be made evident to a demonstration, on scripture principles, that a sinner cannot be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his sin and misery, his own emptiness and helplessness, and his just desert of eternal condemnation—and therefore such convictions must be someway *implied* in what is wrought in his soul—yet nothing proves it to be necessary, that all those things which are implied or presupposed in an act of faith in Christ, must be plainly and distinctly wrought in the soul, in so many successive and separate works of the Spirit, that shall be each one manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the contrary, (as Mr. SHEPARD observes), sometimes the change made in a saint, at first work, is like a confused chaos; so that the saints know not what to make of it. The manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unsearchable: we, as it were, *hear the sound* of it, the *effect* is discernible; but no man can tell *whence it came*, or *whither it went*. And it is oftentimes as difficult to know the way of the Spirit in the new birth, as in the first birth: Eccl. xi. 5. *Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, or how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God, that worketh all.* The ingenerating of a principle of grace in the soul, seems in scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the womb, Gal. iv. 19. And therefore the church is called Christ's mother, Cant. iii. 11. And so is every particular believer, Matth. xii. 49, 50. And the conception of Christ in the womb of the blessed virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost, seems to be a designed resemblance of the conception of Christ, in the soul of a believer, by the power of the same Holy Ghost. And we know not what is the way of the Spirit, in the heart that conceives this holy child. The new creature may use that language in Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret.* Concerning the generation of Christ, both in his person, and also in the hearts of his people, it may be said, as in Is. liii. 8. *Who can declare his generation?* We know not the works of God, that worketh all. *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing*, (Prov. xxv. 2.) and to have *his path as it were in the mighty waters, that his footsteps may not be known:* and especially in the works of his Spirit on the hearts of men, which are the highest and chief of his works. And therefore it is said, Is. xl. 13. *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?* It is to be

feared that some have gone too far towards directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his footsteps for him, and limiting him, to certain steps and methods. Experience plainly shews that God's Spirit is unsearchable and untraceable, in some of the best of Christians, as to the method of his operations in their conversion. Nor does the Spirit of God proceed discernibly in the steps of a particular established scheme, one half so often as is imagined. A scheme of what is necessary, and according to a rule already received and established by common opinion, has a vast, though to many a very insensible influence in forming men's notions of the steps and method of their own experiences. I know very well what their way is; for I have had much opportunity to observe it. Very often, at first, their experiences appear like a confused chaos, as Mr. SHEPARD expresses it: but then, those passages of their experience are picked out, that have most of the appearance of such particular steps that are insisted on; and these are dwelt upon in the thoughts, and from time to time, in the relation they give. These parts grow and brighten in their view; and others, being neglected, grow more and more obscure. What they have experienced is insensibly strained to bring all to an exact conformity to the scheme established. And it becomes natural for ministers, who have to deal with, and direct them while insisting upon distinctness and clearness of method, to do so too. But yet there has been so much to be seen of the operations of the Spirit of God, of late, that they who have had much to do with souls, and are not blinded with a seven-fold vail of prejudice, must know that the Spirit is so exceeding various in his manner of operating, that in many cases it is impossible to trace him or find out his way.

What we have principally to do with, in our inquiries into our own state, or the directions we give to others, is the *nature* of that effect which God has brought to pass in the soul. As to the *steps* which the Spirit took to bring that effect to pass, we may leave them to him. We are often in scripture expressly directed to try ourselves by the *nature* of the fruits; but no where by the Spirit's *method* of producing them*. Many greatly err in their notions

* Mr. SHEPARD, speaking of the soul's closing with Christ, says, "As a child cannot tell how his soul comes into it, nor it may be when; but afterwards it sees and feels that life; so that he were as bad as a beast, that should deny an immortal soul; so here." *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 171.

"If the man do not know the time of his conversion, or first closing with Christ; the minister may not draw any peremptory conclusion from thence, that he is not godly." STODDARD's *Guide to Christ*, p. 83.

"Do not think there is no compunction, or sense of sin, wrought in the soul, because you cannot so clearly discern and feel it; nor the time of the working, and first beginning of it. I have known many that have come with their complaints, that they *were never humbled, they never felt it so*; yet there it hath been, and many times they have seen it, by the other spectacles, and blessed God for it." *Shepard's Sound Believer*, page 38. The late impression in Boston.

of a clear work of conversion; calling that a clear work, where the successive steps of influence, and method of experience is clear: whereas that indeed is the clearest work, (not where the order of *doing* is clearest, but) where the spiritual and divine nature of the work *done*, and effect *wrought*, is most clear.

SECT. IX.

It is no certain sign that affections have in them the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they dispose persons to spend much time in religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external duties of worship.

This has, very unreasonably, of late been looked upon as an argument against the religious affections of some, that they spend so much time in reading, praying, singing, hearing sermons, and the like. It is plain from the scripture, that it is the tendency of true grace to cause persons very much to delight in such religious exercises. True grace had this effect on Anna the prophetess; Luke ii. 37. *She departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.* And grace had this effect upon the primitive Christians in Jerusalem; Acts ii. 46, 47. *And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God.* Grace made Daniel delight in the duty of prayer, and solemnly to attend it three times a day: as it also did David, Psal. lv. 17. *Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray.* Grace makes the saints delight in singing praises to God: Psal. cxxxv. 3. *Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.* And cxlvii. 1. *Praise ye the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God: for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.* It also causes them to delight to hear the word of God preached: it makes the gospel a joyful sound to them, Psal. lxxxix. 15. and makes the feet of those who publish these good tidings, to be beautiful; Is. lii. 7. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!* &c. It makes them love God's public worship; Psal. xxvi. 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.* And Psal. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.* Psal. lxxx. 1, 2, &c. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where*

she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man in whose heart are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Baca, —go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.—Ver. 10. *A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.*

This is the nature of true grace. But yet, on the other hand, persons being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external exercises of religion, and to spend much time in them, is no sure evidence of grace; because such a disposition is found in many who have no grace. So it was with the Israelites of old, whose services were abominable to God; they attended the *new moons, and sabbaths, and calling of assemblies; and spread forth their hands, and made many prayers,* Is. i. 12—15. So it was with the Pharisees; they *made long prayers, and fasted twice a week.* False religion may cause persons to be loud and earnest in prayer: Is. lviii. 4. *Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to cause your voice to be heard on high.* That religion which is not spiritual and saving, may cause men to delight in religious duties and ordinances, Is. lviii. 2. *Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching to God.* It may cause them to take delight in hearing the word of God preached; as it was with Ezekiel's hearers, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.* Herod *heard* John the Baptist *gladly*, Mark vi. 20. and others of his hearers, *for a season, rejoiced in his light*, John v. 35. So the stony-ground hearers *heard the word with joy.*

Experience shews, that persons, from false religion, may be abundant in the external exercises of religion; yea, to give themselves up to them, and devote almost their whole time to them.—Formerly, a sort of people were very numerous in the Romish church, called *recluses*, who forsook the world, and utterly abandoned the society of mankind. They shut themselves up close in a narrow cell, with a vow never to stir out of it, nor to see the face of any, (unless that they might be visited in case of sickness;) but to spend all their days in the exercises of devotion and converse with God. There were also in old time, great multitudes called Hermites and Anchorites, who left the world in order to

spend all their days in lonesome deserts, and to give themselves up to religious contemplations and exercises of devotion. Some sorts of them had no dwellings, but the caves and the vaults of the mountains, and no food, but the spontaneous productions of the earth. I once lived, for many months, next door to a Jew, (the houses adjoining one to another,) and had much opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest person that ever I saw in my life; great part of his time being spent in acts of devotion, at his eastern window, which opened next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the day-time, but sometimes whole nights.

SECT. X.

Nothing can be certainly known of the nature of religious Affections, that they may much dispose persons with their mouths to praise and glorify God.

This indeed is implied in what has been just now observed of abounding and spending much time in the external exercises of religion, and was also hinted before; but because many seem to look upon it as a bright evidence of gracious affection, when persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God, to have their mouths full of his praises, and affectionately to be calling on others to praise and extol him, I thought it deserved a more particular consideration.

No Christian will make it an argument against a person, that he seems to have such a disposition. Nor can it reasonably be looked upon as an evidence *for* a person, if those things which have been already observed and proved be duly considered, viz. that persons without grace may have high affections towards God and Christ, and that there may be counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly, that this is no certain sign of grace, if we consider what instances the scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an account of this in the multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought miracles; Mark ii. 12. *And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.* So Matt. ix. 8. and Luke v. 26. Also Matth. xv. 31. *Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.* So we are told, that on occasion of Christ raising the son of the widow of Nain, Luke vii. 16. *There came a fear on*

all; and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him, Luke iv. 15. *And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.* And how did they praise him with loud voices, crying, *Hosanna to the son of David, hosanna in the highest; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, a little before he was crucified! And after Christ's ascension, when the apostles had healed the impotent man, we are told, that *all men glorified God for that which was done*, Acts iv. 21. When the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, heard from Paul and Barnabas, that God would reject the Jews, and take the Gentiles to be his people in their room, they were affected with this goodness of God to the Gentiles, *and glorified the word of the Lord.* Yet, all that did so were not true believers; but only a certain elect number of them; as is intimated, Acts xiii. 48. *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* Israel, at the Red sea, *sang God's praise; but soon forgat his works.* And the Jews in Ezekiel's time, *with their mouth shewed much love, while their heart went after their covetousness.* And it is foretold of false professors, and real enemies of religion, that they should shew a forwardness to glorify God; Is. lxvi. 5. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word, Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified.*

It is no certain sign that a person is graciously affected, if in the midst of hopes and comforts he is greatly affected with God's unmerited mercy to him that is so unworthy, and seems greatly to extol and magnify free grace. Those that yet remain with unmortified pride and enmity against God, may—when they imagine that they have received extraordinary kindness from God—deplore their unworthiness, and magnify God's undeserved goodness to them. Yet this may arise from no other conviction of their ill-deservings, and from no higher principle, than Saul had, who—while he remained with unsubdued pride and enmity against David—was brought, though a king, to acknowledge his unworthiness, and cry out, *I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly.* And with what great affection and admiration does he magnify and extol David's unmerited and unexampled kindness to him, 1 Sam. xxvi. 16—19. and xxvi. 21. Nebuchadnezzar is affected with God's dispensations, and praises, extols and honours the King of heaven; and both he, and Darius, in their high affections, call upon all nations to praise God, Dan. iii. 28—30. and iv. 1—3. 34, 35, 37. and vi. 25—27.

SECT. XI.

It is no sign that Affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make persons exceeding confident.

It is an argument with some, that persons are deluded if they pretend to be assured of their good estate, and to be carried beyond all doubting of the favour of God; supposing that there is no such thing to be expected, as a full and absolute assurance of hope; unless it be in some very extraordinary circumstances; as in the case of martyrdom. But this is contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, which has been maintained by their most celebrated writers against the Papists; and contrary to the plainest scripture-evidence. It is manifest, that it was a common thing for the saints of whom we have a particular account in scripture, to be *assured*. God, in the plainest and most positive manner, revealed and testified his special favour to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, and others. Job often speaks of his sincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and assurance, often calling God to witness it; and says plainly, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another*, Job. xix. 25, &c. David, throughout the book of Psalms, speaks without hesitancy, and in the most positive manner, of God as *his* God; glorying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence, his shield, salvation, high tower, and the like. Hezekiah appeals to God, as one that knew he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart, 2 Kings xx. 3. Jesus Christ, in his dying discourse with his eleven disciples, John xiv—xvi. (which was as it were Christ's last will and testament to his disciples, and to his whole church) often declares his special and everlasting love to them, in the plainest and most positive terms; and promises them a future participation with him in his glory, in the most absolute manner. And he tells them, at the same time, that he does so to this end, that their joy might be *full;* John xv. 11. *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* See also at the conclusion of his whole discourse, chap. xvi. 33. *These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Christ was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them; he did not desire to hold them in the least suspense. And he concluded that last discourse with a prayer in their presence; wherein he speaks positively to his Father of those eleven disciples, as having savingly *known* him, believed in him, and received and kept his word. He de-

clares, that they were not of the world; that for their sakes he sanctified himself; and that his will was, that they should be with him in his glory. And tells his Father, that he spake these things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them, ver. 13. By these things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's designs, that there should be sufficient provision made, for his saints to have full assurance of their future glory.

The apostle Paul, through all his epistles, speaks in an assured strain; ever asserting his special relation to Christ, his Lord, Master, and Redeemer, with his interest in, and expectation of the future reward. It would be endless to take notice of all places that might be enumerated; I shall mention but three or four: Gal. ii. 20. *Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Phil. i. 21. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day.*

The nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that covenant, plainly shew it to be God's design to make ample provision for the saints having an assured hope of eternal life, while living here upon earth. For so are all things ordered in that covenant, that every thing might be made sure on God's part. *The covenant is ordered in all things and sure:* the promises are most full, very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. God's declared design in all this is, that the heirs of the promises might have an undoubting hope, and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. Heb. vi. 17, 18. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.* But all this would be in vain, for any such purpose as the saints strong consolation, and their hope of obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure promises in ordinary cases were not attainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can *know* that those promises are made to him. And in vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, Heb. ix. 9. if *assurance* of freedom from the guilt of sin is not attainable.

It further appears, that *assurance* is attainable in ordinary cases, in that *all* Christians are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it, 2 Pet. i. 5—8. And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming Christians, and an argument of something very blameable in them, not to *know* whether Christ be in them or no, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* And it is implied, that it is a very blameable negligence in Christians, if they practise Christianity after such a manner as to remain uncertain of the reward, 1 Cor. ix. 26. *I therefore so run, as not uncertainly.* And, to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians knowing their interest in the saving benefits of Christianity, is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the apostles tell us by what means *Christians* (and not only *apostles* and *martyrs)* were wont to know this; Cor. ii. 12. *Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.* And 1 John ii. 3. *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* And ver. 5. *Hereby know we that we are in him.* Chap. iii. 14. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* Verse 19. *Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* Verse 24. *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.* (So Chap. iv. 13. and Chap. v. 2, 19.)

Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that persons are hypocrites, and their affections wrong, because they seem to be out of doubt respecting their own salvation, and their affections seem to banish all fears of hell.

On the other hand, it is no sufficient reason to determine that men are saints, and their affections gracious, because they are attended with confidence that their state is good, and their affections divine*. Nothing can be certainly argued from their confidence, how great and strong soever it be. A man may boldly call God

* "O professor, look carefully to your foundation: *be not high-minded, but fear.* You have, it may be, done and suffered many things in and for religion; you have excellent gifts and sweet comforts: a warm zeal for God, and high confidence of your integrity: all this may be right, for ought that I, or (it may be) you know; but yet, it is possible it may be false also. You have sometimes judged yourselves, and pronounced yourselves upright; but remember your final sentence is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again, in his more equal balance, and should say, "Mene, Tekel, Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting?" What a confounded man wilt thou be, under such a sentence! *Quæ resplendent in conspectu hominis, sordent in conspectu Judicis;* Things that are highly esteemed of men, are an abomination in the sight of God; he seeth not as men seeth. Thy heart may be false, and thou not know it: yea, it may be false, and thou strongly confident of its integrity." (Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity, Chap. ii. sect. 5.

"Some hypocrites are a great deal more confident than many saints." (Stoddard's 'Discourse on the way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy,' p. 128)

his Father, and commonly speak in the most bold, familiar, and appropriating language in prayer, *My Father, My dear Redeemer, my sweet Saviour, my beloved*, and the like. He may use the most confident expressions before men, about the goodness of his state; such as, "I know certainly that God is my Father: I know so surely as there is a God in heaven, that he is my God; I know I shall go to heaven, as well as if I were there; I know that God is now manifesting himself to my soul, and is now smiling upon me." He may seem to have done for ever with any inquiry or examination into his state, as a thing sufficiently known, and out of doubt, and to contemn all that so much as intimate that there is reason to doubt whether all is right. Yet such things are no signs at all that it is indeed what he is confident it is*. Such an over-bearing, high-handed and violent sort of confidence as this, affecting to declare itself with a most glaring show in the sight of men, has not the countenance of a true Christian assurance. It savours more of the spirit of the Pharisees, who never doubted but that they were saints, the most eminent of saints, and were bold to thank God for the great distinction he had made between them and other men. And when Christ intimated that they were blind and graceless, they despised the suggestion; John ix. 40. *And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?* If they had more of the Spirit of the Publican—who, in a sense of his exceeding unworthiness, stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, condemning himself as a sinner, their confidence would have more resembled one who humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the hearts of natural men are, what principles they are under, what blindness and deceit, what self-flattery, self-exaltation, and self-confidence reigns there, we need not at all wonder that their high opinion of themselves, and confidence of their happy circumstances, are as high and strong as mountains, and as violent as a tempest. For what should hinder, when once conscience is blinded, convictions are killed, false affections high, and those forementioned principles let loose? When, moreover, these principles are prompted by false joys and

* "Doth the works of faith in some believers, bear upon its top-branches the full ripe fruits of a blessed assurance; Lo, what strong confidence, and high built persuasions of an interest in God, have sometimes been found in unsanctified ones! Yea, so strong may this false assurance be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment-seat of God, and there defend it. Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the assured believer with joy unspeakable and full of glory, giving them, through faith, a prelibation or foretaste of heaven itself, in those first fruits of it? How near to this comes what the apostle supposes may be found in apostates!" (Flavel's Husbandry Spiritualized, ch. xii.)

comforts, excited by some pleasing imaginations impressed by Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light?

When once a hypocrite is thus established in a false hope, he has not those things to cause him to call his hope in question, that oftentimes are the occasion of doubting to true saints; as, *first*, he has not that cautious spirit, that great sense of the vast importance of a sure foundation, and that dread of being deceived. The comforts of the true saints increase awakening and caution, and a lively sense how great a thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just, and omniscient Judge. But false comforts put an end to these things, and dreadfully stupify the mind. *Secondly*, The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindness, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own understanding, that the true saint has. Those that are deluded with false discoveries and affections, are evermore highly conceited of their light and understanding. *Thirdly*, The devil does not assault the hope of the hypocrite, as he does the hope of a true saint. The devil is a great enemy to a true Christian's hope, not only because it tends greatly to his comfort, but also because it is of a holy, heavenly nature, greatly tending to promote and cherish grace in the heart, and a great incentive to strictness and diligence in the Christian life. But he is no enemy to the hope of a hypocrite, which above all things establishes his interest in him. A hyprocrite may retain his hope without opposition, as long as he lives, the devil never attempting to disturb it. But there is perhaps no true Christian but what has his hope assaulted by him. Satan assaulted Christ himself, upon this, whether he were the Son of God or no: and the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple, who is most privileged in this world, to be as his master. *Fourthly*, He who has a false hope, has not that sight of his own corruptions which the saint has. A true Christian has ten times so much to do with his heart and its corruptions, as an hypocrite. The sins of his heart and practice appear to him in their awful blackness; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious thing, that any grace can be consistent with such corruption, or should be in such a heart. But a false hope hides corruption, covers it all over, and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own eyes.

There are two sorts of hypocrites: one such as are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; many of whom are professed Arminians, in the doctrine of justification: and the other, such as are deceived with false discoveries and elevations. These last often cry down works and men's own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteousness of their discoveries and humiliation, and exalt

themselves to heaven with them. These two kinds of hypocrites Mr. Shepherd, in his exposition of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, distinguishes by the names of *legal* and *evangelical* hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident, that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their hope, and are with the most difficulty brought off from it. I have scarcely known an instance of such an one that has been undeceived. The chief grounds of the confidence of many of them, are impulses and supposed revelations, (sometimes with texts of scripture, and sometimes without) like what many of late have had concerning future events. These impulses about their good estate they call the witness of the Spirit; entirely misunderstanding the nature of the witness of the Spirit, as I shall shew hereafter. Those who have had visions and impulses about other things, have generally had such things as they are desirous and fond of, revealed to them: and no wonder that persons who give heed to such things, have the same sort of visions or impressions about their own eternal salvation. Why may they not suppose a revelation made to them that their sins are forgiven them, that their names are written in the book of life, that they are in high favour with God, &c. and especially when they earnestly seek, expect, and wait for evidence of their election and salvation this way, as the surest and most glorious evidence of it? Neither is it any wonder, that when they have such a supposed revelation of their good estate, it raises in them the highest degree of confidence of it. It is found by abundant experience, that those who are led away by impulses and imagined revelations, are extremely confident. They suppose that the great JEHOVAH has declared these and those things to them; and having his immediate testimony, a strong confidence is the highest virtue. Hence they are bold to say, *I know this or that;—I know certainly,—I am as sure as that I have a being*, and the like: and they despise all argument and inquiry into the case. And it is easy to be accounted for, that impressions and impulses about that which is so pleasing, so suiting their self-love and pride, as their being the dear children of God, should make them strongly confident: especially when, with their impulses and revelations, they have high affections, which they take to be the most eminent exercises of grace. I have known several persons, who have had a fond desire of something of a temporal nature, through a violent passion that has possessed them; they have earnestly wished it should come to pass, and have met with many discouragements in it; but at last have had an impression, or supposed revelation that they should obtain what they sought. They have looked upon this as a sure promise from the Most High, which has made them most ridiculously confident, against all manner of reason to con-

vince them to the contrary, and all events working against them. And nothing hinders, but that persons who are seeking their salvation may be deceived by the like delusive impressions, and be made confident the same way.

The confidence of many of this sort, whom that Mr. Shepard calls *evangelical hypocrites*, is like the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings: they will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence. And in one sense, it is much more immoveable than a truly gracious assurance; a true assurance is not upheld, but by the soul being kept in a holy frame, and grace maintained in lively exercise. If the actings of grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless frame, he loses his assurance: but this confidence of hypocrites will not be shaken by sin; they (at least some of them) will maintain their boldness in their hope, in the most corrupt frames and wicked ways; which is a sure evidence of their delusion†.

And here I cannot but observe, that there are certain doctrines often preached to the people, which need to be delivered with more caution and explanation than they frequently are; for as they are by many understood, they tend greatly to establish this delusion and false confidence of hypocrites. The doctrines I speak of are those of *Christians living by faith, not by sight: their giving glory to God, by trusting him in the dark; living upon Christ, and not upon experiences; not making their good frames the foundation of their faith.* These are excellent and important doctrines indeed, rightly understood, but corrupt and destructive, as many understand them. The scripture speaks of our living or walking by faith, and not by sight, in no other way than these, viz. When we are governed by a respect to eternal things, which are the objects of faith, and are not seen, and not by a respect to temporal things, which are seen; when we believe things revealed, that we never saw with bodily eyes; and also exercise faith in the promise of future things, without yet seeing or enjoying the things promised, or knowing the way how they can be fulfilled. This will be easily evident to any one that looks over the scriptures, which speak of *faith* in opposition

† Mr. Shepard speaks of it "as a presumptuous peace, that is not interrupted and broke by evil works." And says, that "the spirit will sigh, and not sing in that bosom, whence corrupt dispositions and passions break out." And that "though men in such frames may seem to maintain the consolation of the Spirit, and not suspect their hypocrisy, under pretence of trusting the Lord's mercy; yet they cannot avoid the "condemnation of the world." (Parable of the Ten Virgins, Part I. p. 139)

Dr. Ames speaks of it as a thing by which the peace of a wicked man may be distinguished from the peace of a godly man, "that the peace of a wicked man continues, whether he performs the duties of piety and righteousness or no; provided those crimes are avoided that appear horrid to nature itself." (Cases of Conscience, lib. III. ch. vii.)

to *sight**. But this doctrine, as it is understood by many, is, that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ, without spiritual light; even although they are in a dark, dead frame, and for the present, have no spiritual experiences or discoveries. It is truly the *duty* of those who are thus in darkness to *come out* of darkness into light, and to *believe*. But that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or sight, is an ani-scriptural and absurd doctrine.

The scripture is ignorant of any such faith in Christ of the operation of God, that is not founded in a spiritual sight of Christ. That believing on Christ, which accompanies a title to everlasting life, is a *seeing the Son, and believing on him*, John vi. 40. True faith in Christ is never exercised, any further than persons *behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord*, and have *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. and iv. 6. They into whose minds *the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, does not shine, they believe not*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. That faith, which is without spiritual light, is not the faith of the children of the light and of the day; but the presumption of the children of darkness. And therefore to press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual light or sight, tends greatly to help forward the delusions of the prince of darkness. Men not only cannot exercise faith without some spiritual light, but they can exercise faith only just in *such proportion* as they have spiritual light. Men will trust in God no further than they know him: and they cannot be in the exercise of faith in him, further than they have a sight of his fulness and faithfulness in *exercise*. Nor can they have the exercise of trust in God, any further than they are in a *gracious frame*. They that are in a dead carnal frame, doubtless *ought* to trust in God; because that would be the same thing as coming out of their bad frame, and turning to God: but to exhort men confidently to trust in God, and so hold up their hope and peace, though they are not in a gracious frame, and continue still to be so, is the same thing, in effect, as to exhort them confidently to trust in God, but not with a gracious trust: and what is that but a wicked presumption? It is just as impossible for men to have a strong or lively trust in God, when they have no lively exercises of grace, or sensible Christian experiences, as it is for them to be *in* the lively exercises of grace, *without* the exercises of grace!

It is true, that it is the *duty* of God's people to trust in him when in darkness, even though they remain still in darkness, in one sense, viz. when the aspects of his providence are dark, and

* As 2 Cor. iv. 18. and v. 7. Heb. xi. 1, 8, 13, 17, 27, 29. Rom. viii. 24. John xx. 29.

look as though God had forsaken them, and did not hear their prayers. Many clouds gather, many enemies surround them, with a formidable aspect, threatening to swallow them up, and all events of providence seem to be against them. All circumstances seem to render the promises of God difficult to be fulfilled, but he must be trusted out of sight, *i. e.* when we cannot see which way it is possible for him to fulfil his word. Every thing but God's mere word makes it look unlikely, so that if persons believe, they must hope against hope. Thus the ancient Patriarchs, and thus the Psalmist, Jeremiah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and the apostle Paul, gave glory to God by trusting him in darkness. We have many instances of such a glorious, victorious faith in the eleventh of the Hebrews. But how different a thing is this, from trusting in God, without spiritual sight, and being at the same time in a dead and carnal frame!

Spiritual light may be let into the soul in one way, when it is not in another; and so there is such a thing as the saints trusting in God, and also knowing their good estate, when they are destitute of some kinds of experience. For instance, they may have clear views of God's all-sufficiency and faithfulness, and so may confidently trust in him, and know that they are his children; and yet not have those clear and sweet ideas of his love, as at other times. Thus it was with Christ himself in his last passion. They may also have views of God's sovereignty, holiness, and all-sufficiency, enabling them quietly to submit to him, and to exercise a sweet and most encouraging hope in his fulness, when they are not satisfied of their own good estate. But how different things are these, from confidently trusting in God, without spiritual light or experience!

Those who thus insist on persons living by faith, when they have no experience, and are in very bad frames, are also very *absurd* in their notions of *faith*. What they mean by faith is, believing that they *are in a good estate*. Hence they count it a dreadful sin for them to doubt of their state, whatever frames they are in, and whatever wicked things they do, because it is the great and heinous sin of unbelief; and he is the best man, and puts most honour upon God, that maintains his hope of his *good estate* the most confidently and immoveably, when he has the least light or experience; that is to say, when he is in the worst frame and way; because forsooth, that it is a sign that he is strong in faith, giving glory to God, and against hope believes in hope. But from what bible do they learn this notion of faith, that it is a man's confidently believing that he is in a good estate*? If this be faith

* "Men do not know that they are godly, by believing that they are godly. We know many things by faith, Heb. xi. 3. 'By faith we understand that the worlds

the Pharisees had faith in an eminent degree; some of whom Christ teaches, committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. The scripture represents faith, as that by which men are *brought into* a good estate; and therefore it cannot be the same thing, as believing that they *are already* in a good estate. To suppose that faith consists in persons believing that they are in a good estate, is in effect the same thing, as to suppose that faith consists in a person's believing that he has faith, or in *believing that he believes!*

Indeed persons doubting of their good estate, may in several respects *arise from* unbelief. It may be from unbelief, or because they have so little faith, that they have so little *evidence* of their good estate. If they had more experience of the actings of faith, and so more experience of the exercise of grace, they would have clearer evidence that their state was good; and so their doubts would be removed. And their doubting of their state may be from unbelief thus, when though there be many things that are good evidences of a work of grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a state of favour with God, because it is *they*, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to anger against them. Their doubts in such a case arise from unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient sense *of*, and reliance *on*, the infinite riches of God's grace, and the sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners. They may also be from unbelief, when they doubt of their state, because of the *mystery* of God's dealings with them. They are not able to reconcile such dispensations with God's favour to them. Some doubt whether they have any interest in the promises, because from the aspect of providence, they appear so unlikely to be fulfilled; the difficulties in the way are so many and great. Such doubting arises from want of dependence upon God's almighty power, and his knowledge and wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such persons their *unbelief*, and their *doubting of their state*, are not the same thing; though one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their state, on such grounds as these; and they may be to blame, that they have no more grace, and no more of its present exercises, to be an evidence to them of the goodness of their state. Men are doubtless to blame for being in a dead, carnal frame; but when they are in such a frame, and have no sensible experience of the exer-

were made by the word of God.' Faith is the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. Thus men know the Trinity of persons of the Godhead; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that he that believes in him will have eternal life; the resurrection of the dead. And if God should tell a saint that he has grace, he might know it by believing the word of God. But it is not this way, that godly men do know that they have grace. It is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." (Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion,' p. 83, 84.)

cises of grace, but on the contrary, are very much under the prevalence of their lusts, and an unchristian spirit, *they are not to blame for doubting of their state.* It is as impossible, in the nature of things, that a holy and Christian hope should be kept alive in its clearness and strength, in such circumstances, as it is to keep the light in the room, when the candle that gives it is put out; or to maintain the bright sunshine in the air, when the sun is gone down. Distant experiences, when darkened by present prevailing lust and corruption, will never keep alive a gracious confidence and assurance. If the one prevail, the other sickens and decays upon it. Does any one attempt to nourish and strengthen a little child by repeated blows on the head with a hammer? Nor is it at all to be lamented, that persons doubt of their state in such circumstances; but on the contrary, it is desirable and every way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wise and merciful constitution of things which God hath established. For so hath God constituted things, in his dispensations towards his own people, that when their *love* decays, and the exercises of it become weak, *fear* should arise. They need *fear* then to restrain them from sin, to excite them to care for the good of their souls, and so to stir them up to watchfulness and diligence in religion. But God hath so ordered, that when *love* rises, and is in vigorous exercise, then fear should vanish, and be driven away; for then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent principle in exercise, to restrain them from sin, and stir them up to duty. No other principles will ever make men conscientious, but one of these two, *fear* or *love:* and therefore, if one of these should not prevail as the other decayed, God's people when fallen into dead and carnal frames, when love is asleep, would be lamentably exposed indeed. Hence, God has wisely ordained, that these two opposite principles of love and fear, should rise and fall, like the two opposite scales of a balance; when one rises the other sinks. Light and darkness unavoidably succeed each other; if light prevail, so much does darkness cease, and no more; and if light *decay*, so much does darkness prevail. So it is in the heart of a child of God; if divine *love decay* and fall asleep, and lust prevail, the light and joy of hope goes out, and dark fear arises; and if, on the contrary, divine *love prevail*, and come into lively exercise, this brings in the brightness of hope, and drives away black lust and fear with it. Love is the *spirit of adoption*, or the childlike principle; if that slumbers, men fall under fear, which is the *spirit of bondage*, or the servile principle; and so on the contrary. And if love, or the spirit of adoption, be carried to a great height, it quite drives away all fear, and gives full assurance; 1 John iv. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.* These two oppo-

site principles of lust and holy love, bring fear or hope into the hearts of God's children, just in proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural influence, without something adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the distemper of melancholy, doctrinal ignorance, prejudices of education, wrong instruction, false principles, peculiar temptations, &c.

Fear is cast out by the Spirit of God, no other way than by the prevailing of love: nor is it ever maintained by his Spirit, but when love is asleep. At such a time, in vain is all the saint's self-examinations, and poring on past experience, in order to establish his peace, and get assurance. For it is contrary to the nature of things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have assurance at such a time.

They therefore directly thwart God's wise and gracious constitution of things, who exhort others to be confident in their hope, when in dead frames; under a notion *of living by faith and not by sight*, and *trusting God in the dark*, and *living upon Christ, and not upon experiences;* and who warn them not to doubt of their good estate, lest they should be guilty of the dreadful sin of unbelief. It has a direct tendency to establish the most presumptuous hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their state in question, how much soever wickedness rages—reigns in their hearts, and prevails in their lives—under a notion of honouring God, by *hoping against hope*, and confidently trusting in God, when things look very dark. And, doubtless, vast has been the mischief that has been done this way.

Persons cannot be said to forsake Christ, and live on their experiences, merely because they use them as evidences of grace; for there are no other evidences that they can take. But then may persons be said to live upon their experiences, when they make a *righteousness* of them; and when, instead of keeping their eye on God's glory, and Christ's excellency, they turn it on themselves. They entertain their minds by viewing their own attainments, their high experiences, and the great things they have met with, which are bright and beautiful in their own eyes. They are rich and increase with goods in their own apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an esteem of them, on the same account, as they have of themselves. This is living on experiences, and not on Christ; and is more abominable in the sight of God, than the gross immoralities of those who make no pretences to religion. But this is a far different thing from improving experiences as *evidences* of an interest in a glorious Redeemer.

SECT. XII.

Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the nature of religious affections, that the relations persons give of them, are very affecting.

The true saints have not such a spirit of discerning, that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For though they know experimentally what true religion is, in the internal exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither feel nor see, in the heart of another*. There is nothing in others that comes within their view, but outward manifestations and appearances; but the scripture plainly intimates, that this way of judging what is in men by outward appearances is at best uncertain, and liable to deceit; 1 Sam. xvi. 7. *The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.* Is. xi. 3. *He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears*†. They commonly are but poor judges, and dangerous counsellors in soul cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining persons' states, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary faculty of discerning and distinguishing, in these great affairs; as though all was open and clear to them. They betray one of these three things; either that they have had but little experience; or are persons of a weak judgment; or that they have a great degree of pride and self-confidence, and so ignorance of themselves. Wise and experienced men will proceed with great caution in such an affair.

When there are many probable appearances of piety in others, it is the duty of the saints to receive them cordially into their charity, to love, and rejoice in them, as their brethren in Christ Jesus. But yet the best of men may be deceived, when the appearances seem to them exceeding fair and bright, even so as en-

* "Men may have the knowledge of their own conversion: the knowledge that other men have of it is uncertain; because no man can look into the heart of another, and see the workings of grace there. (Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion, chap. xv. at the beginning.)

† Mr. Stoddard observes, That "all visible signs are common to converted and unconverted men; and a relation of experiences, among the rest." (Appeal to the Learned, p. 75.)

"O how hard it is for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat! and how many upright hearts are now censured, whom God will clear! how many false hearts are now approved, whom God will condemn! Men ordinarily have no convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms; which at most beget but a conjectural knowledge of another's state. And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright, or on the other side, absolve and justify the wicked. And truly, considering what hath been said, it is no wonder that dangerous mistakes are so frequently made in this matter." (Flavel's Husbandry Spiritualized, chap. xii.)

tirely to gain their charity, and conquer their hearts. It has been a common thing in the Church of God, for bright professors, received as eminent among the saints, to fall away and come to nothing*. And this we need not wonder at, if we consider the things already observed; things which may appear in men who are altogether graceless. Nothing hinders but that *all* these things may meet together in men, and yet they be without a spark of grace in their hearts. They may have religious affections of many kinds together; they may have a sort of affection towards God that bears a great resemblance of real love to him. They may have a kind of love to the brethren, great appearances of admiration of God's perfections and works, sorrow for sin, reverence, submission, self-abasement, gratitude, joy, religious longings, and zeal for the interest of religion and the good of souls. These affections may come after great awakenings and convictions of conscience; and there may be great appearances of a work of humiliation. Counterfeit love and joy, and other affections, may seem to follow one another, just in the same order that is commonly observable in the holy affections of true converts. And these religious affections may be carried to a great height, may cause abundance of tears, yea, may overcome the nature of those who are the subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, fervent, and fluent in speaking of the things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it. They may have many sweet texts of scripture, and precious promises, brought with great impression on their minds; and their affections may dispose them, with their mouths, to praise and glorify God in a very ardent manner, and fervently to call upon others to praise him, exclaiming against their unworthiness, and extolling free grace. They may, moreover, dispose them to abound in the external duties of religion, such as prayer, hearing the word preached, singing and religious conference; and these things attended with a great resemblance of Christian assurance in its greatest height, when the saints mount on eagles' wings,

* "Be not offended, if you see great cedars fall, stars fall from heaven, great professors die and decay: do not think they be all such: do not think that the elect shall fall. Truly, some are such that when they fall, one would think a man truly sanctified might fall away, as the Arminians think; 1 John ii. 19. *They were not of us.* I speak this, because the Lord is shaking; and I look for great apostacies: for God is trying all his friends, through all the Christian world. In Germany what profession was there! who would have thought it? The Lord who delights to manifest that openly, which was hid secretly, sends a sword and they fall." (Shepard's Parab. Part. I. p. 118, 119.)

"The saints may approve thee, and God condemns thee; Rev. iii. 1. *Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* Men may say, there is a true Nathaniel; and God may say, there is a self cozening Pharisee. Reader, thou hast heard of Judas and Demas, of Ananias and Sapphira, of Hymeneus and Philetus, once renowned and famous professors, and thou hast heard how they proved at last." (Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity, chap. ii. sect. 5.)

above all darkness and doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all these things, and yet nothing more than the common influences of the Spirit of God, joined with the delusions of Satan, and a wicked, deceitful heart. To which I may add, that all these things may be attended with a sweet natural temper, a good doctrinal knowledge of religion, a long acquaintance with the saints' way of expressing their affections and experiences, and a natural ability and subtilty in accommodating their expressions and manner of speaking to the dispositions and notions of the hearers, with a taking decency of expression and behaviour, formed by a good education. How great therefore may the resemblance be, as to all outward expressions and appearances, between a hypocrite and a true saint! Doubtless, it is the glorious prerogative of the ominiscient God, as the great searcher of hearts, to be able well to separate between these sheep and goats. And what an indecent self-exaltation and arrogance is it, in poor fallible dark mortals, to pretend, that they can determine and know, who are really sincere and upright before God, and who are not.

Many seem to lay great weight on that, and to suppose it to be what may determine them with respect to others' real piety, when they not only tell a plausible story, but when, in giving an account of their experiences, they make such a representation, and speak after such a manner, that they *feel* their talk; that is to say, when their talk seems to harmonize with their own experience, and their hearts are touched, affected, and delighted, by what they hear them say, and drawn out by it in dear love to them. But there is not that certainty in such things, and that full dependence to be laid upon them, which many imagine. A true saint greatly delights in holiness; it is a most beautiful thing in his eyes; and God's work, in savingly renewing and making holy and happy a poor, perishing soul, appears to him a most glorious work. No wonder, therefore, that his heart is touched, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable account of this work, wrought on his own heart, and when he sees in him probable appearances of holiness; whether those pleasing appearances have any thing real to answer them, or no. And if he use the same words, which are commonly used to express the affections of true saints, and tell of many things following one another in an order agreeable to the method of another's experience, and also speak freely and boldly, and with an air of assurance; no wonder that the other thinks his experiences harmonize with his own. And if besides all this, in giving his relation, he speak with much affection; and above all, if in speaking he shew much affection, such affection as the Galatians did to the apostle Paul; these things will naturally have a powerful influence to affect and draw his hearer's heart, and open wide the doors of his

charity towards him. David speaks as one who had felt Ahithophel's talk, and had once a sweet savour and relish of it. And therefore exceeding great was his surprise and disappointment, when he fell; it was almost too much for him. Psal. lv. 12—14. *It was not an enemy—then I could have borne it;—but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: we took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.*

It is with professors of religion, especially such as become so in a time of an out-pouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with the blossoms in the spring*; there are vast numbers of blossoms upon the trees, which all look fair and promising; but yet very many of them never come to any thing. Many, in a little time, wither, drop off, and rot under the trees. Indeed, for a while, they look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only so, but smell sweet, and send forth a pleasant odour; so that we cannot certainly distinguish those blossoms which have in them that secret virtue which will afterwards appear in the fruit. We cannot tell which of them have that inward solidity and strength which shall enable them to bear, and cause them to be perfected by the hot summer sun that will dry up the others. It is the mature fruit, which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful colours and smell of the blossom, that we must judge by. So new converts, professedly so, in their talk about religious things, may appear fair, and be very savoury, and the saints may think they talk feelingly. They may *relish* their talk, and imagine they perceive a *divine* savour in it; and yet all may come to nothing.

It is strange how hardly men are brought to be contented with the rules and directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other rules of their own inventing that seem to them wiser and better. I know of no directions or counsels which Christ ever delivered more plainly, than the rules he has given to guide us in our judging of others' sincerity; *viz. that we should judge of the tree chiefly by the fruit.* Yet this, it seems, will not do; but other ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and certain. And woful have been the mischievous consequences of this arrogant setting up of men's wisdom, above the wisdom of Christ. I believe many *saints* have gone much out of the way of Christ's word, in this respect: and some of them have been chastised with whips, and (I had almost said) scorpions, to bring them back again. But many things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince us, that ordinarily those who have gone farthest this way—that have been

* A time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, reviving religion, and producing the pleasant appearances of it, in new converts, is in scripture compared to this very thing, *viz.* the spring-season, when the benign influences of the heavens cause the blossoms to put forth. Cant. ii. 11, 12.

most highly conceited of their faculty of discerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptorily and suddenly to determine the state of men's souls—have been hypocrites, who have known nothing of true religion.

In the parable of the wheat and tares, it is said, Matth. xii. 26. *When the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.* As though the tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the wheat, *until then*, as Mr. FLAVEL observes†; who mentions it as an observation of JEROME'S, that *wheat and tares are so much alike, until the blade of the wheat comes to bring forth the ear, that it is next to impossible to distinguish them.* And then, Mr. FLAVEL adds, "How difficult so ever it be to discern the difference between wheat and tares; yet doubtless the eye of sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man can discern the difference between special and common grace. For all saving graces in the saints, have their counterfeits in hypocrites; there are similar works in those, which a spiritual and very judicious eye, may easily mistake for the saving and genuine effects of a sanctifying spirit."

As it is the ear or the fruit which distinguishes the wheat from the tares, so this is the true *Shibboleth*, that he who stands as judge at the passages of Jordan, makes use of to distinguish those that shall pass over Jordan into the true Canaan, from those that should be slain at the passages. For the Hebrew word *Shibboleth*, signifies an ear of corn. And perhaps the more full pronunciation of Jephthah's friends, *Shibboleth*, may represent a full ear with fruit in it, typifying the fruits of the friends of Christ, the anti-type of Jephthah; and the more lean pronunciation of the Ephraimites, his enemies, may represent their empty ears, typifying the show of religion in hypocrites, without substance and fruit. This is agreeable to the doctrine we are abundantly taught in scripture, viz. That he who is set to judge those that pass through death, whether they have a right to enter into the heavenly Canaan or no, or whether they should not be slain, will judge every man according to his works.

We seem to be taught the same things, by the rules given for the priest's discerning of the leprosy. In many cases it was impossible for the priest to determine whether a man had the leprosy, or whether he were clean, by the most narrow inspection of the appearances upon him, until he had waited to see what the appearances would come to, and had shut up the person who shewed himself, one seven days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the hair, which grew out of the spot

† Husbandry Spiritualized, Chap. xii.

that was shewed him, which was as it were the fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finish what I have to say under this head, I would say something to a strange notion some have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good estate that others are in—as though it were immediately revealed to them from heaven—by their love flowing out to them in an extraordinary manner. They argue thus, that their love being very sensible and great, may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true Christian love: and if it be a true Christian love, the Spirit of God must be the author of it: and inasmuch as the Spirit of God—who knows certainly whether others are the children of God or no, and is a spirit of truth—is pleased, by an uncommon influence upon them, to cause their love to flow out, in an extraordinary manner, towards such a person, as a child of God; it must needs be, that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows that that person is a child of God. But such persons might be convinced of the falseness of their reasoning, if they would consider whether or no it be not their duty, and what God expressly requires of them, to love those as the children of God, who they think are the children of God, and of whom they have no reason to think otherwise, from all that they can see in them, though God, who searches the hearts, knows them not to be his children. If it be their duty, then it is good, and the want of it sin; and therefore, the Spirit of God may be the author of it. Surely, the Spirit of God, without being a spirit of falsehood, may in such a case assist a person to do his duty, and keep him from sin. But then, they argue from the uncommon *degree* and special *manner*, in which their love flows out to the person; which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the object to be a child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their duty to love all such as they are bound to think are the children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a *very great degree*, though God, from other things which he sees, knows them not to be so. It is men's duty to love all whom they are bound in charity to look upon as the children of God, with a vastly dearer affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost capacity of our nature, so it is our duty to love those who we think are so near and dear to him as his members, with an exceeding dear affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is sin in us not to love them so. We ought to pray to God that he would by his Spirit keep us from sin, and enable us to do our duty: and may not his Spirit answer our prayers, and enable us to do our duty, in a particular instance, without lying? If he cannot, then the Spirit of God is bound

not to help his people to do their duty in some instances, because he cannot do it without being a spirit of falsehood. But surely God is so far a sovereign, that he may enable us to do our duty when he pleases, and on what occasion he pleases. When persons think others are his children, God may have other ends in causing their exceedingly endeared love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them whether their opinion of them be right or no. May he not have that merciful end in it, to enable them to do their duty, and to keep them from that dreadful, infinite evil, sin? And will they say, God shall not shew them that mercy in such a case? If I am at a distance from home, and hear, that in my absence my house is burnt, but my family have, in some extraordinary manner, all escaped the flames; and every thing in the circumstances of the story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible; would it not be sin in me, in such a case, not to feel a very great degree of gratitude to God, though the story in fact be not true! And is not God so sovereign, that he may, if he please, on that occasion, enable me to do my duty in a much further degree than I used to do it, and yet not incur the charge of deceitfulness, in confirming a falsehood?

It is exceeding manifest, that a *mistake* may be the *occasion* of a gracious exercise, and consequently a gracious influence of the Spirit of God, by Rom. xiv. 6. *He that eateth to the Lord, he eateth, and giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.* The apostle is speaking of those who, through erroneous and needless scruples, avoided eating legally unclean meats.—By this it is very evident, that there may be true exercises of grace, a true respect *to the Lord*, and particularly a true thankfulness, which may be occasioned by an erroneous judgment and practice. And consequenly, an error may be the occasion of those truly holy exercises that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if so, it is certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a degree the Spirit of God may give this holy exercise on such an occasion.

This notion, of certainly discerning another's state by love flowing out, is not only *not founded* on reason or scripture, but it is *anti-scriptural, against* the rules of scripture; which—without saying a word of any such way of judging the state of others as this—direct us to judge chiefly by the *fruits* that are seen in them. The doctrines of scripture plainly teach us, that the state of others, towards God, cannot be known by us, as in Rev. ii. 17. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the* hidden manna, *and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which* no man knoweth, saving that he receiveth it. And Rom. ii. 29. *He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose*

praise is not of men, but of God. By this last expression, *whose praise is not of men, but of God,* the apostle has respect to the insufficiency of men to judge concerning him, whether he be *inwardly* a Jew or no. They could easily see by *outward* marks, whether men were outwardly Jews, but it belongs to God alone to give a determining voice, respecting their inward state. This is confirmed by the same apostle's use of the phrase in 1 Cor. iv. 5. *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.* The apostle, in the two foregoing verses, says, *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* It is further confirmed, because the apostle, in this second chapter to the Romans, directs his speech especially to those who had a high conceit of their own holiness, made their boast of God, were confident of their own power of discerning, that they knew God's will, and approved the things which were excellent, or tried the things that differ (as in the margin, v. 18.) *They were confident that they were guides of the blind, and a light to them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes:* and so took upon them to judge others. (See ver. 1. and 17—20.)

And how arrogant must their notion be, who imagine they can certainly know others' godliness, when that great apostle Peter pretends not to say any more concerning Sylvanus, than that he was *a faithful brother, as he supposed?* 1 Pet. v. 12. Though this Sylvanus appears to have been a very eminent minister of Christ, an evangelist, a famous light in God's church at that day, and an intimate companion of the apostles. (See 2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Thess, i. 1. and 2 Thess. i. 1.)

PART III.

SHEWING WHAT ARE DISTINGUISHING SIGNS OF TRULY GRACIOUS AND HOLY AFFECTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I COME now to take notice of some things, wherein those affections that are spiritual and gracious, differ from those that are not so.—But before I proceed directly to the distinguishing characters, I would previously mention some things which I desire may be observed, concerning the marks I shall lay down.

1. I am far from undertaking to give such signs of gracious affections, as shall be sufficient to enable any certainly to distinguish true affections from false in others; or to determine positively which of their neighbours are true professors, and which are hypocrites. In so doing, I should be guilty of that arrogance which I have been condemning. It is plain that Christ has given rules to all Christians, to enable them to judge of those professors of religion, with whom they are concerned so far as is necessary for their own safety, and to prevent their being led into a snare by false teachers, and false pretenders to religion. It is also beyond doubt, that the scriptures abound with rules, which may be very serviceable to ministers, in counselling and conducting souls committed to their care, in things appertaining to their spiritual and eternal state. Yet it is also evident, that it was never God's design to give us any rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our fellow-professors are his, and to make a full and clear separation between sheep and goats. On the contrary, it was God's design to reserve this to himself, as his prerogative. And therefore no such distinguishing signs as shall enable Christians or ministers to do this, are ever to be expected to the world's end; for no more is ever to be expected from any signs found in the word of God, or gathered from it, than Christ designed them for.

2. No such signs are to be expected, that shall be sufficient to enable those saints certainly to discern their own good estate, who are very low in grace, or are such as have much departed from God, and are fallen into a dead, carnal and unchristian frame. It is not agreeable to God's design, (as already observed) that such should know their good estate: nor is it desirable that they should; but on the contrary, it is every way best that they should not. We have reason to bless God, that he has made no provision that such should certainly know the state they are in, any other way, than by first coming out of their ill frame and way.

Indeed it is not properly through the defect of the *signs* given in the word of God, that every saint living, whether strong or weak, and those who are in a bad frame, as well as others, cannot certainly know their good estate by them. For the rules *in themselves* are certain and infallible, and every saint has, or has had those things in himself, which are sure evidences of grace; for *every*, even the *least* act of grace is so. But the difficulty comes through his defect to whom the signs are given. There is a twofold defect in that saint who is very low in grace, or in an ill frame, which makes it impossible for him to know certainly that he has true grace, by the best signs and rules which can be given him.

First, A defect in the *object*, or the qualification to be viewed and examined. I do not mean an essential defect; because I suppose the person to be a real saint: but a defect in degree: grace being very small, cannot be clearly and certainly discerned and distinguished. Things that are very small we cannot clearly discern, as to their form, or distinguish them one from another; though as they are in themselves, their form may be very different. There is doubtless a great difference between the body of man, and the bodies of other animals, in the first conception in the womb: but yet, if we should view the different embryos, it might not be possible for us to discern the difference, by reason of the imperfect state of the object; but as it comes to greater perfection, the difference becomes very plain. The difference between creatures of very *contrary qualities*, is not so plainly to be seen while they are very young, even after they are actually brought forth, as in their more perfect state. The difference between doves and ravens, or doves and vultures, when they first come out of the egg, is not so evident; but as they grow to their perfection, it is exceeding great and manifest. The grace of those I am speaking of is mingled with so much corruption, which clouds and hides it, as makes it impossible to be known with certainty. Though different things before us, may have in themselves many marks thoroughly distinguishing them one from another; yet if we see them only in a thick smoke, it may never-

theless be impossible to distinguish them. A fixed star is easily distinguishable from a comet, in a clear sky; but if we view them through a cloud, it may be impossible to see the difference. When true Christians are in an ill frame, guilt lies on the conscience; which will bring fear, and so prevent the peace and joy of an assured hope.

Secondly, There is in such a case a defect in the *eye*. As the feebleness of grace and the prevalence of corruption, obscures the object; so it enfeebles the sight. Corruption in the soul darkens the sight as to all spiritual objects, of which grace is one. Sin is like some distempers of the eyes, that make things to appear of different colours from those which properly belong to them; or, like other distempers that put the mouth out of taste, so as to disable it from distinguishing good and wholesome food from bad, but every thing tastes bitter. Men in a corrupt and carnal frame, have their spiritual senses in but a poor plight for judging and distinguishing spiritual things.

For these reasons, no signs that can be given will actually satisfy persons in such a case. Let the signs given be never so good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not serve them. It is like giving a man rules how to distinguish visible objects in the dark: the things themselves may be very different, and their difference may be very well and distinctly described to him; yet all is insufficient to enable him to distinguish them, because he is in the dark. And therefore many persons in such a case spend time in a fruitless labour, in poring on past experiences, and examining themselves by signs which they hear laid down from the pulpit, or read in books. There is other work for them to do, which, while they neglect, all their self-examinations are like to be in vain, if they should spend never so much time in them. The accursed thing is to be destroyed from their camp, and Achan to be slain; and until this be done they will be in trouble. It is not God's design that men should obtain assurance in any other way, than by mortifying corruption, increasing in grace, and obtaining the lively exercises of it. And although self-examination be a duty of great use and importance, and by no means to be neglected; yet it is not the *principal* means, by which the saints do get satisfaction of their good estate. Assurance is not to be obtained so much by *self-examination*, as by *action*. The apostle Paul sought assurance chiefly this way, even by *forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* And it was by this means chiefly that he obtained assurance, 1 Cor. ix. 26. *I therefore so run, as not uncertainly.* He obtained assurance of winning the prize more by *run-*

ning than by *considering*. The *swiftness of his pace*, did more towards his assurance of a conquest, than the *strictness of his examination*. Giving all diligence to grow in grace, by adding to faith, virtue, &c. is the direction that the apostle Peter gives us, for *making our calling and election sure*, and having an *entrance ministered to us abundantly into Christ's everlasting kingdom*. Without this our eyes will be dim, and we shall be as men in the dark; we cannot plainly see either the forgiveness of our sins past, or our heavenly inheritance that is future, and *far off*, 2 Pet. i. 5—11*.

Therefore, though good rules to distinguish true grace from counterfeit, may tend to convince hypocrites, and be of great use to the saints, in many respects; and among other benefits, they may be very useful to them in order to remove many needless scruples, and establish their hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any such rules as shall be sufficient of themselves, without other means, to enable all true saints to see their good estate, or from supposing that they should be the principal means of their satisfaction.

3. Nor is there much encouragement, from the experience of present or past times, to lay down rules or marks to distinguish between true and false affections, in hopes of convincing any considerable number of that sort of hypocrites, who have been deceived with great false discoveries and affections, and are once settled in false confidence. Such hypocrites are so conceited of their own wisdom, so blinded and hardened with self-righteousness, (but very subtle and secret, under the disguise of great humility), and so invincible a fondness of their pleasing conceit, their great exaltation, that it usually signifies nothing at all to lay before them the most convincing evidences of their hypocrisy. Their state is indeed deplorable, and next to those that have committed the unpardonable sin. Some of this sort, seem to be most out of the reach of means of conviction and repentance. But yet the laying down of good rules may be a means of convincing other kinds of hypocrites; and God is able to convince even this kind, and his grace is not to be limited, nor means to be neglected. Besides, such rules may be of use to the true saints, in order to detect false affections, which they may have mingled with true; and be a means of their religion becoming more pure, and like gold tried in the fire.

* "The way to know your godliness, is to renew the visible exercises of grace." "The more the visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be." The more men's grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2. 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord.'" (Stoddard's Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy, p. 139 and 142.)

Having premised these things, I now proceed directly to take notice of those things in which true religious affections are distinguished from false.

SECT. I.

Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious, arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural, and divine.

I will explain what I mean by these terms, whence will appear their use to distinguish between those affections which are spiritual, and those which are not so. We find that true saints, or those persons who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, are in the New-Testament called *spiritual* persons. And their being *spiritual* is spoken of as their peculiar character, and that wherein they are distinguished from those who are not sanctified. This is evident, because those who are spiritual are set in opposition to natural men, and carnal men. Thus the spiritual man and the natural man are set in opposition one to another, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is* SPIRITUAL, *judgeth all things.* The scripture explains itself to mean an ungodly man, or one that has no grace by a natural man: thus the apostle Jude, speaking of certain *ungodly* men, that had crept in unawares among the saints, (ver. 4. of his epistle), says, ver. 19. *These are sensual, having not the Spirit.* This the apostle gives as a reason why they behaved themselves in such a wicked manner as he had described. Here the word ψυχικοι translated *sensual*, is the very same, which in 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15, is translated *natural.* In like manner, in the continuation of the same discourse, *spiritual men* are opposed to *carnal men;* which the connexion plainly shews mean the same, as *spiritual men* and *natural men*, in the foregoing verses; *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto* SPIRITUAL, *but as unto* CARNAL; *i. e.* as in a great measure unsanctified*. For therefore, if by natural and carnal, in these texts, be intended *unsanctified*, then doubtless by spiritual, which is opposed thereto, is meant sanctified and gracious. And as the saints are called spiritual in scripture, so we also find that there are certain properties, qualities, and principles, that have the same epithet given them. So we read of a *spiritual mind*, Rom.

* That by *carnal* the apostle means corrupt and unsanctified, is abundantly evident, by Rom. vii. 25. and viii. 1, 4—12, 13. Gal. v. 16. to the end. Col. ii. 18.

viii. 6. 7. of *spiritual wisdom*, Col. i. 9. and of *spiritual blessings*, Eph. i. 3.

Now it may be observed, that the epithet *spiritual*, in these and other parallel texts of the New Testament, is not used to signify any relation of persons or things to the spirit or soul of man, as the spiritual part of man, in opposition to the body, or material part. Qualities are not said to be spiritual, because they have their seat in the soul, and not in the body: for there are some properties that the scripture calls *carnal* or *fleshly*, which have their seat as much in the soul, as those properties that are called *spiritual*. Thus pride and self-righteousness, and a man's trusting to his own wisdom, the apostle calls *fleshly*, Col. ii. 18. Nor are things called spiritual, because they are conversant about those things that are immaterial, and not corporeal. For so was the wisdom of the wise men, and princes of this world, conversant about spirits, and immaterial beings; yet the apostle speaks of them as *natural men*, totally ignorant of those things that are *spiritual*, 2 Cor. chap. ii. But it is with relation to the *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit of God*, that persons or things are termed *spiritual*, in the New Testament. *Spirit*, as the word is used to signify the third person in the Trinity, is the substantive, of which is formed the adjective *spiritual* in the holy scriptures. Thus Christians are called spiritual persons, because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in them. And things are called spiritual as related to the Spirit of God; 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.* Here the apostle himself expressly signifies, that by *spiritual things*, he means *the things of the Spirit of God*, and *things which the Holy Ghost teacheth*. The same is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole context. Again, Rom. viii. 6. *To be* carnally minded, *is death; but to be* SPIRITUALLY MINDED, *is life and peace.* The apostle explains what he means by being carnally and spiritually minded, in what follows in the 9th verse, and shews that by being spiritually minded he means, having the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in the heart. *But ye are not in the flesh, but* IN THE SPIRIT, *if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man* have not the *Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* The same is evident by all the context. But time would fail to produce all the evidence of this in the New Testament.

And it must be here observed, that although it is with relation to the Spirit of God and his influences, that persons and things are called *spiritual;* yet not all those persons who are subject to any

kind of influence of the Spirit of God, are ordinarily called so in the New Testament. They who have only the *common* influences of God's Spirit, are not so called, in the places cited above. It has been already proved, that by *spiritual* men is meant *godly* men, in opposition to natural, carnal, and unsanctified men. And it is most plain, that the apostle by *spiritually minded*, Rom. viii. 6. means *graciously* minded. And though the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which natural men might have, are sometimes called spiritual, because they are from the Spirit; yet natural men, whatever gifts of the Spirit they had, were not, in the usual language of the New Testament, called spiritual persons. For it was not by men's having the *gifts*, but the *virtues* of the Spirit, that they are called spiritual, as is apparent, by Gal. vi. 1. *Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.* Meekness is one of those virtues which the apostle had just spoken of in the verses next preceding, shewing what are the *fruits of the Spirit.* Those qualifications, therefore, are said to be *spiritual* in the language of the New Testament, which are truly *gracious*, and peculiar to the saints.

Thus, when we read of spiritual wisdom and understanding—as in Col. i. 9. *We desire that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*—hereby is intended that wisdom which is gracious, and from the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. For, doubtless, by *spiritual wisdom*, is meant that which is opposite to what the scripture calls *natural wisdom;* as the *spiritual man* is opposed to the *natural man.* And therefore spiritual wisdom is doubtless the same with that wisdom which is from above, Jam. iii. 17. *The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, &c.* for this the apostle opposes to *natural* wisdom, ver. 15. *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual*—the last word in the original is the same that is translated *natural*, in 1 Cor. ii. 14.

So that although natural men may be the subjects of many influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many scriptures†, yet they are not in the sense of the scripture, spiritual persons; neither are any of those effects, common gifts, qualities, or affections, that are from the influence of the Spirit of God upon them, called spiritual things. The great difference lies in these two things.

1. The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode; and to influence their hearts,

† As Numb. xxiv. 2. 1 Sam. x. 10. and xi. 6, and xvi. 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. and many others.

as a principle of new nature, or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action. The scriptures represent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the saints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode, and everlasting dwelling-place, (1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. John xiv. 16, 17.) And he is represented as being there so united to the faculties of the soul, that he becomes there a principle or spring of a new nature and life.

So the saints are said to live by Christ living in them, Gal. ii. 20. Christ by his spirit not only *is* in them, but *lives* in them; they live by his life. His Spirit is united to them, as a principle of life in them. They not only drink living water, but this *living water becomes a well* or *fountain of water*, in the soul, *springing up into* spiritual and *everlasting life*, John iv. 14. and thus becomes a principle of life in them—this living water, the evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, (chap. vii. 38, 39.) The light of the Sun of righteousness does not only shine *upon them*, but is so communicated to them that *they shine* also, and become little images of that sun which shines upon them. The sap of the true vine is not only conveyed into them, as the sap of a tree may be conveyed into a vessel, but is conveyed as sap is from a tree into one of its living branches, where it becomes a principle of life. The Spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the saints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called *spiritual*.

On the other hand, though the Spirit of God may many ways influence natural men, yet because it is not thus communicated to them, as an indwelling principle, they do not derive any denomination or character from it; for there being no *union*, it is not their *own*. The light may shine upon a body that is very dark or black; and though that body be the subject of the light, yet, because the light becomes no principle of light to it, so as to cause the body to shine, hence that body does not properly receive its denomination from it, so as to be called a *lightsome body*. So the Spirit of God acting *upon* the soul only, without communicating itself to be an active principle *in* it, cannot denominate it *spiritual*. A body that continues black, may be said *not to have light*, though the light shines upon it: so natural men are said *not to have the Spirit*, Jude 19. *sensual* or *natural*, as the word is elsewhere rendered, *having not the Spirit*.

2. Another reason why the saints and their virtues are called spiritual, (and which is the principal thing,) is, that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital principle in their souls, produces there those effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own *proper nature*. Holiness is the nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in scripture the *Holy Ghost*. Holiness,

which is as it were the beauty and sweetness of the divine nature, is as much the proper nature of the Holy Spirit, as heat is the nature of fire, or sweetness was the nature of that holy anointing oil, which was the principal type of the Holy Ghost in the Mosaic dispensation. Yea, I may rather say, that holiness is as much the proper nature of the Holy Ghost, as sweetness was the nature of the sweet odour of that ointment. The Spirit of God so dwells in the hearts of the saints, that he there, as a seed or spring of life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine nature. He makes the soul a partaker of God's beauty and Christ's joy, so that the saint has truly fellowship *with* the Father, and *with* his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the communion or participation *of* the Holy Ghost. The grace which is in the hearts of the saints, is of the *same nature* with the divine holiness, though infinitely less in degree; as the brightness in a diamond which the sun shines upon, is of the same nature with the brightness of the sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in degree. Therefore Christ says, John iii. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit; i. e.* the grace that is begotten in the hearts of the saints, is something of the same nature with that Spirit, and so is properly called a *spiritual nature;* after the same manner as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, or that which is born of corrupt nature, is corrupt nature.

But the Spirit of God never influences the minds of natural men after this manner. Though he may influence them many ways, yet he never, in any of his influences, communicates himself to them in his own proper nature. Indeed he never acts *disagreeably* to his nature, either on the minds of saints or sinners: but the Spirit of God may act upon men *agreeably* to his own nature, and not exert his *proper nature* in the acts and exercises of their minds. The Spirit of God may act so, that his *actions* may be agreeable to his nature, and yet may not at all *communicate* himself in his proper nature, in the *effect* of that action. Thus, for instance, the Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters, and there was nothing disagreeable to his nature in that action; but yet he did not at all *communicate himself* in that action, there was nothing of the *proper nature* of the Holy Spirit in that *motion* of the waters. And so he may act upon the minds of men many ways, and not communicate himself any more than when he acts on inanimate things.

Thus, not only the manner of the Spirit's *relation* to the subject of his operations, is different; but the influence and *operation itself,* and the *effect wrought* exceeding different. So that not only the persons are called *spiritual,* as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them, but those qualifications, affections, and experiences that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also *spiritual.*

Therein they differ vastly in their nature and kind from all that a natural man can be the subject of, while he remains in a natural state; and also from all that of which men or devils can be the authors. It is a spiritual work in this high sense; and therefore above all other works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no work so high and excellent; for there is no work wherein God doth so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere creature hath, in so high a sense, a participation of God; so that it is expressed in scripture by the saints *being made partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. and *having God dwelling in them, and they in God*, 1 John iv. 12, 15, 16. and chap. iii. 21, *and having Christ in them*, John xvii. 21. Rom. viii. 10. *being the temples of the living God*, 2 Cor. vi. 16. *living by Christ's life*, Gal. ii. 20. *being made partakers of God's holiness*, Heb. xii. 10. *having Christ's love dwelling in them*, John xvii. 26. *having his joy fulfilled in them*, John xvii. 13. *seeing light in God's light*, and *being made to drink of the river of God's pleasure*, Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9. *having fellowship with God*, or *communicating and partaking with him*, (as the word signifies), 1 John i. 3. Not that the saints are made partakers of the *essence* of God—or *godded* with God, and *christed* with Christ, according to the blasphemous language of some heretics—but, to use the scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God's *fulness*, (Eph. iii. 17—19. John i. 16.) that is, of God's spiritual beauty and happiness, according to the measure and capacity of a creature. So the word *fulness* signifies in scripture language. Grace in the hearts of the saints being therefore the most glorious work of God, wherein he communicates of the goodness of his nature, it is doubtless his *peculiar* work, and in an eminent manner above the power of all creatures. And this is what I mean by those influences that are *divine*, when I say, that *truly gracious affections arise from those influences that are spiritual and divine.*

True saints *only* have that which is spiritual; others not only have not these communications of the Spirit in so high a *degree* as the saints, but have nothing of that *nature* or *kind*. For the apostle James tells us, that *natural* men *have not the Spirit*; and Christ teaches the necessity of a new birth, or a being born of the Spirit, from this, that *he that is born of the flesh, has* only *flesh*, and no *spirit*, John iii. 6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any degree; for the apostle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are his, Rom. viii. 9—11. And having the Spirit of God is spoken of as a certain sign, that persons shall have the eternal inheritance; for it is the earnest of it, (2 Cor. i. 22. and v. 5. Eph. i. 14;) and having any thing *of the Spirit* is mentioned as a sure sign of being in Christ, 1 John iv. 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in*

him, because he hath given us of *his Spirit.* Ungodly men, not only have not so much of the divine nature as the saints, but they they are not *partakers of it;* which implies that they have nothing of it; for a being *partaker* of the divine nature is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the true saints, 2 Pet. i. 4. Ungodly men are not *partakers of God's holiness*, Heb. xii. 10. A natural man has no experience of those things that are spiritual; he is so far from it, that he knows nothing about them, and is a perfect stranger to them. To talk about such things is all foolishness to him, he knows not what it means, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* And to the like purpose Christ teaches us that the world is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God, John xiv. 17. *Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.* And it is further evident, that natural men have nothing in them of the same nature with the true grace of the saints, because the apostle teaches us, that those of them who go farthest in religion, have *no charity*, or true Christian love, (1 Cor. chap. xiii.) So Christ elsewhere reproves the Pharisees, those high pretenders to religion, that they *had not the love of God in them*, John v. 42. Hence natural men have no communion or fellowship with Christ, or *participation with him*, as these words signify, for this is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the saints, (1 John i. 3, 6, 7. and 1 Cor. i. 8, 9.) And the scripture speaks of the actual existence of a gracious principle in the soul, though in its first beginning, like a seed planted there, as inconsistent with a man's being a sinner, 1 John iii. 9. And natural men are represented in scripture, as having no spiritual *light*, no spiritual *life*, and no spiritual *being;* and therefore conversion is often compared to opening the eyes of the *blind*, raising the *dead*, and a work of *creation*, wherein creatures are made entirely new, and becoming new-born children.

From these things it is evident, that those gracious influences of the saints, and the effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above nature, and altogether of a different kind from any thing that men find in themselves by the exercise of natural principles. No improvement of those principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting of them to higher degrees, and no kind of composition will ever bring men to them; because they not only differ from what is natural, and from every thing that natural men experience, in degree and circumstances, but also in *kind;* and are of a nature vastly more excellent. And this is what I mean by *supernatural*, when I say, that *gracious affections are from those influences that are supernatural.*

From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the saints, through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward *perception* or *sensation* of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from any thing that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified. For, if God by his mighty power produces something that is new, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature—all that which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any thing of the like kind—then, doubtless, something entirely new is felt, or perceived. There is what some metaphysicians call a new *simple idea*. If grace be, in the sense above described, an entirely new kind of principle; then the *exercises* of it are also new. And if there be in the soul a new sort of conscious exercises, which the soul knew nothing of before, and which no improvement, composition, or management of what it was before could produce; then it follows that the mind has an entirely new kind of perception or sensation. Here is, as it were, a new *spiritual sense*, or a principle of new kind of perception or spiritual sensation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other senses. And something is perceived by a true saint, in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely diverse from any thing that is perceived in them, by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by only looking on and feeling it. So that the spiritual perceptions which a sanctified and spiritual person has, are not only diverse from all that natural men have as the perceptions of the same sense may differ one from another, but rather as the ideas and sensations of different senses differ. Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often in scripture compared to the giving of a new sense, eyes to see, ears to hear, unstopping the ears of the deaf, opening the eyes of them that were born blind, and turning from darkness unto light. And because this spiritual sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other principles of perception, and all our faculties are useless and vain; therefore the giving of this new sense, with the blessed fruits and effects of it in the soul, is compared to raising the dead, and to a new creation.

This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that attend it, are no *new faculties*, but new *principles* of nature, I use the word *principles*, for want of a word of a more determine signification. By a *principle of nature* in this place, I mean that foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular manner or kind of exercise of the faculties of the soul; or a natural habit, or foundation for action, giving a person ability and dis-

position to exert the faculties in exercises of such a certain kind; so that to exert the faculties in that kind of exercises, may be said to be his nature. So this new spiritual sense is not a new faculty of understanding, but it is a new foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of understanding. So that the new holy disposition of heart that attends this new sense, is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of will.

The Spirit of God, in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some way acts upon *natural principles;* but gives no new *spiritual principle.* Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural man visions, as he did Balaam, he only impresses a natural principle—the sense of seeing, immediately exciting ideas of that sense—but gives no new sense; neither is there any thing supernatural, spiritual or divine in it. If the Spirit of God impresses on a man's imagination, either in a dream, or when he is awake, any outward ideas of any of the senses, either voices, or shapes and colours, it is only exciting ideas of the same kind that he has by natural principles and senses. So if God reveals to a natural man any secret fact; for instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercising any new spiritual principle, or giving the ideas of any new spiritual sense; it is only impressing, in an extraordinary manner, the ideas that will hereafter be received by sight and hearing. So in the more ordinary influences of the Spirit of God on the hearts of sinners, he only assists natural principles to do the same work to a greater degree, which they do of themselves by nature. Thus the Spirit of God by his common influences may assist men's natural ingenuity, as he assisted Bezaleel and Aholiab in the curious works of the tabernacle. He may assist men's natural abilities in political affairs, and improve their courage and other natural qualifications; as he is said to have put his spirit on the seventy elders, and on Saul, so as to *give him another heart.* God may greatly assist natural men's reason, in their reasoning about secular things, or about the doctrines of religion, and may greatly advance the clearness of their apprehensions and notions in many respects, without giving any spiritual sense. So in those awakenings and convictions that natural men may have, God only assists conscience, which is a natural principle, to do that work in a further degree, which it naturally does. Conscience naturally gives men an apprehension of right and wrong, and suggests the relation there is between them and a retribution. The Spirit of God assists men's consciences to do this in a greater degree, and against the stupifying influence of worldly objects and their lusts.

Many other ways might be mentioned, wherein the Spirit acts upon, assists and moves natural principles; but after all, it is no more than nature moved, acted, and improved; here is nothing supernatural and divine. But the Spirit of God in his spiritual influences on the hearts of his saints, operates by infusing or exercising new, divine and supernatural principles; principles which are indeed a new and spiritual nature, and principles vastly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural men.

From what has been said it follows, that all spiritual and gracious affections are attended with, and arise from some apprehension, idea, or sensation of mind, which is in its whole nature different, yea exceeding different from all that is or can be in the mind of a natural man. The natural man discerns nothing of it (1 Cor. ii. 14.) any more than a man without the sense of tasting can conceive of the sweet taste of honey; or a man without the sense of hearing can conceive of the melody of a tune; or a man born blind can have a notion of the beauty of a rainbow.

But here two things must be observed, in order to the right understanding of this.

1. On the one hand it must be observed, that not every thing which appertains to spiritual affections, is new and entirely different from what natural men experience; some things are common to gracious affections with other affections; many circumstances, appendages, and effects are common. Thus a saint's love to God has a great many things appertaining to it, which are common with a man's natural love to a near relation. Love to God makes a man seek the honour of God, and desire to please him; so does a natural man's love to his friend make him desire his honour, and to please him. Love to God causes a man to delight in the thoughts of him, in his presence; to desire conformity to God, and the enjoyment of him; and so it is with a man's love to his friend. Many other things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet, that idea which the saint has of the loveliness to God, and the kind of delight he has in that view, which is as it were the marrow and quintessence of his love, is peculiar, and entirely diverse from any thing that a natural man has, or can have any notion of. And even in those things that seem to be common, there is something peculiar. Both spiritual love and natural, cause *desires* after the object beloved; but they are not the same sort of desires; there is a sensation of soul in the spiritual desires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural desires. Both spiritual and natural love are attended with *delight* in the object beloved; but the sensations of delight are not the same, but entirely and exceedingly diverse. Natural men have conceptions of many things *about* spiritual affections; but there is something in them

which is as it were the *nucleus*, or kernel, of which they have no more conceptions, than one born blind has of colours.

It may be clearly illustrated thus: we will suppose two men: one, born without the sense of tasting, the other with it. The latter loves honey, because he knows the sweet taste of it; the other loves certain sounds and colours. The *love* of each has many things in *common;* it causes *both* to desire, and delight in the object beloved, causes grief when it is absent, &c. but yet that sensation which he, who knows the taste of honey, has of its excellency and sweetness, as the foundation of his love, is entirely different from any thing the other has or can have. So both these persons may in some respects *love the same object.* The one may love a delicious kind of fruit, not only because he has seen its pleasant colours, but knows its sweet taste; the other, perfectly ignorant of the latter, loves it only for its beautiful colours. Many things seem, in some respect, to be common to both; both love, both desire, and both delight; but the love, desire, and delight of the one, is altogether diverse from that of the other. The difference between the love of a natural and spiritual man resembles this; but only it must be observed, that the kinds of excellency perceived in spiritual objects, by these different kinds of persons, are in themselves vastly more diverse than the different kinds of excellency perceived in delicious fruit, by a *tasting* and a *tasteless* man. In another respect, it may not be so great, viz. as the spiritual man may have a sense to perceive that divine and most peculiar excellency but in small beginnings, and in a very imperfect degree.

2. On the other hand, it must be observed, that a natural man may have religious apprehensions and affections, which may be, in many respects, very new and surprising to him; and yet what he experiences, be nothing like the exercises of a new nature. His affections may be very new, in a very new degree, with a great many new circumstances, a new co-operation of natural affections, and a new composition of ideas. This may be from some extraordinary powerful influence of Satan, and some great delusion. There is nothing, however, but nature extraordinarily acted. As if a poor man who had always dwelt in a cottage, and had never looked beyond the obscure village where he was born, should, in a jest, be taken to a magnificent city and prince's court, and be there arrayed in princely robes, and set in the throne, with the crown royal on his head, peers and nobles bowing before him—and should be made to believe that he was now a glorious monarch—his ideas, and the affections he would experience, would in many respects be very new, and such as he had no imagination of before. Yet who would suppose, that what was done to him was any thing more than extraordinarily

raising and exciting natural principles, and newly exalting, varying and compounding such sort of ideas as he had by nature? Who would infer, that this was giving him a *new sense*?

Upon the whole, I think it is clearly manifest, that all truly gracious affections arise from special and peculiar influences of the Spirit, working that *sensible effect* or *sensation* in the souls of the saints, which are entirely different from all that is possible a natural man should experience; different, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature. So that a natural man not only cannot experience that which is *individually* the same, but cannot experience any thing but what is exceedingly diverse, and immensely below it, in its *kind;* and that which the power of men or devils is not sufficient to produce, or any thing of the same nature.

I have insisted the more largely on this matter, because this view of the subject is evidently of great importance and use, in order to discover the delusions of Satan, in many kinds of false religious affections, by which multitudes are deluded, and probably have been in all ages of the Christian church; also in order to settle and determine many articles of doctrine, concerning the operations of the Spirit of God, and the nature of true grace.—Let us now, therefore, apply these things to the purpose of this discourse.

From hence it appears, that impressions which some have on their imagination—their imaginary ideas of God, or Christ, or heaven, or any thing appertaining to religion—have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the nature of true grace. Though such things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they are not any part of gracious experience.

Here, for the sake of the less informed, I will explain what is intended by *impressions on the imagination*, and *imaginary ideas*. The imagination is that power of the mind, whereby it can have a conception, or idea, of external things, or objects of the outward senses, when those things are not present, and therefore not perceived by the senses. It is called *imagination*, from the word *image;* because thereby a person can have an image of some external thing in his mind, when that thing is not present in reality, nor any thing like it. What we perceive by our five senses, *seeing*, *hearing*, *smelling*, *tasting*, and *feeling*, are external things: and when a person has an image of these things in his mind, but does not really see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an *imagination* of them, and these ideas are *imaginary ideas*. When such ideas are strongly impressed upon the mind, and the image is very lively, almost as if one saw, or heard them, &c. that is called an *impression on the imagination*. Thus colours and shapes, are outward things, objects of the outward

sense of *seeing:* therefore, when any person has in his mind a lively idea of any shape, or colour, or form of countenance; of light or darkness, such as he perceives by the sense of seeing; of any marks made on paper, suppose letters and words written in a book: that is to have an *imagination*, or an external and imaginary idea of such things as we sometimes perceive by our bodily eyes. And when we have the ideas of sounds, voices, or words, spoken, this is only to have ideas of outward things, perceived by the external sense of *hearing*, and so that also is *imagination*. When these ideas are impressed with liveliness, almost as if they were really heard with the ears, this is to have an *impression on the imagination*. And so I might instance in the ideas of things appertaining to the other three senses of *smelling*, *tasting*, and *feeling*.

Many who have had such things, have ignorantly supposed them to be of the nature of spiritual discoveries. They have had lively ideas of some external shape, and beautiful form of countenance; and this they call spiritually seeing Christ. Some have had impressed upon them ideas of a great outward light; and this they call a spiritual discovery of God's or Christ's glory. Some have had ideas of Christ hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; and this they call a spiritual sight of Christ crucified, and the way of salvation by his blood. Some have seen him with his arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a discovery of the sufficiency of Christ's grace and love. Some have had lively ideas of heaven, and of Christ on his throne there, and shining ranks of saints and angels; and this they call seeing heaven opened to them. Some from time to time have had a lively idea of a person of a beautiful countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual discovery of the love of Christ to their souls, and tasting the love of Christ. And they look upon it as sufficient evidence that these things are spiritual discoveries, and that they see them spiritually, because they say they do not see these things with their bodily eyes, but in their hearts; for they can see them when their eyes are shut. And in like manner, the imaginations of some have been impressed with ideas of the sense of hearing; they have had ideas of words, as if they were spoken to them, sometimes the words of scripture, and sometimes other words. They had ideas of *Christ speaking comfortable words* to them. These things they have called having the inward call of Christ, hearing the voice of Christ spiritually in their hearts, having the witness of the Spirit, the inward testimony of the love of Christ, &c.

The common, and less considerate sort of people, are the more easily led into apprehensions that these are spiritual things, because, spiritual things being invisible, we are forced to use figu-

rative expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow names from sensible objects by which to signify them. Thus we call a clear apprehension of things spiritual by the name of *light;* and having an apprehension of things, by the name of *seeing* such things. The conviction of the judgment, and the persuasion of the will by the word of Christ in the gospel, we signify by *spiritually hearing the call of Christ.* The scripture itself abounds with such like figurative expressions. Persons hearing these often used, and having pressed upon them the necessity of having their eyes opened, of having a discovery of spiritual things, seeing Christ in his glory, having the inward call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for some external discoveries, and imaginary views. And when they have them, they are confident that now their eyes are opened, now Christ has discovered himself to them, and they are his children; and hence they are exceedingly affected and elevated with their deliverance, and many kinds of affections are at once set in a violent motion.

But it is exceedingly apparent that such ideas have nothing in them which is spiritual and divine, in the sense wherein it has been demonstrated that all gracious experiences are spiritual and divine. These external ideas are in no wise entirely, and in their whole nature, diverse from all that men have by nature: so far from this, they are of the same sort which we have by the external senses, among the inferior powers of human nature. They are merely ideas of external objects, of the outward sensitive kind; the same sort of sensations of mind (differing not in degree, but only in circumstances) that we have by those natural principles which are common to us with the beasts. This is a low, miserable notion of spiritual sense, to suppose that it is only a conceiving or imagining that sort of ideas which we have by our animal senses, which senses, the beasts have in as great perfection as we. Is this any thing better than, as it were, a turning of Christ, or the divine nature in the soul, into a mere animal? Is there any thing wanting in the soul, as it is by nature, to render it capable of being the subject of all these external ideas, without any new principles? A natural man is capable of having an idea, and a lively idea of shapes, and colours, and sounds, when they are absent, even as capable as a regenerate man is: so there is nothing supernatural in them. And it is known by abundant experience, that it is not the advancing or perfecting of human nature, which makes persons more capable of having such lively and strong imaginary ideas; but on the contrary, the weakness of body and mind, makes persons abundantly more susceptive of such impressions*.

* "Conceits and whimsies abound most in men of weak reason; children, and such as are cracked in their understanding, have most of them; strength of reason

As to a truly *spiritual* sensation, not only is the manner of its coming into the mind extraordinary, but the sensation itself is totally diverse from all that men have, or can have, in a state of nature, as has been shewn. But as to these *external* ideas, though the way of their coming into the mind is sometimes unusual, yet the ideas in themselves are not the better for that; they are still of no different sort from what men have by their senses; they are of no higher kind, nor a whit better. For instance, the external idea a man has now of Christ hanging on the cross, and shedding his blood, is no better in itself, than the external idea that the Jews his enemies had, who stood round his cross, and saw this with their bodily eyes. The imaginary idea which men have now of an external brightness and glory of God, is no better than the idea the wicked congregation in the wilderness had of the external glory of the Lord at Mount Sinai, when they saw it with bodily eyes; or any better than that idea which millions of cursed reprobates will have of the external glory of Christ at the day of judgment, who shall see, and have a very lively idea of ten thousand times greater external glory of Christ, than ever yet was conceived in any man's imagination*. Is the image of Christ which men conceive in their imaginations, in its own nature, of any superior kind to the idea the Papists conceive of Christ, by the beautiful and affecting images of him which they see in their churches? Are the affections they have, if built primarily on such imaginations, any better than the affections raised in ignorant people, by the sight of those images, which oftentimes are very great; especially when these images, through the craft of the priests, are made to move, speak, weep, and the like†? Merely the way of

banishes them, as the sun does mists and vapours. But now the more rational any gracious person is, by so much more is he fixed and settled, and satisfied in the grounds of religion: yea, there is the highest and purest reason in religion: and when this change is wrought upon men, it is carried on in a rational way. Is. i. 18. John xix. 9." (Flavel's Preparation for Sufferings, Chap. vi.)

* "If any man should see, and behold Christ really, immediately, this is not the saving knowledge of him. I know the saints do know Christ as if immediately present; they are not strangers by their distance: if others have seen them more immediately, I will not dispute it. But if they have seen the Lord Jesus as immediately as if here on earth, yet Capernæum saw him so; nay, some of them were disciples for a time, and followed him, John vi. And yet the Lord was hid from their eyes. Nay, all the world shall see him in his glory, which shall amaze them: and yet this is far short of having the saving knowledge of him, which the Lord doth communicate to the elect. So that though you see the Lord so really, as that you become familiar with him, yet Luke xiii. 26. *Lord have we not eat and drank*, &c. and so perish." (Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins, P. I. p. 197, 198.)

† "Satan is transformed into an angel of light: and hence we have heard that some have heard voices; some have seen the very blood of Christ dropping on them, and his wounds in his side; some have seen a great light shining in the chamber; some wonderfully affected with their dreams; some in great distress have had inward witness. *Thy sins are forgiven;* and hence such liberty and joy, that they are ready to leap up and down the chamber. O adulterous generation! this is natural and usual with men, they would fain see Jesus, and have him present to give them peace; and hence Papists have his images—Wo to them that have no other manifested Christ but such an one." (Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins, P. I. p. 198.

persons receiving these imaginary ideas, does not alter the nature of the ideas themselves that are received: let them be received in what way they will, they are still but external ideas, or ideas of outward appearances, and so are not spiritual. Yea, if men should actually receive such external ideas by the immediate power of the most high God upon their minds, they would not be spiritual, they should be no more than a common work of the Spirit of God; as is evident in fact, in the instance of Balaam, who had impressed on his mind, by God himself, a clear and lively outward representation or idea of Jesus Christ, as *the Star rising out of Jacob*, when *he heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, and saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance*, Numb. xxiv. 16, 17. But Balaam had no spiritual discovery of Christ; that day-star never spiritually rose in his heart, he being but a natural man.

And as these external ideas have nothing divine or spiritual in their nature, and nothing but what natural men, without any new principles, are capable of; so there is nothing in their nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable, and unparalleled exercise of the glorious power of God, in order to their production, which it has been shown there is in the production of true grace. There appears to be nothing in their nature above the power of the devil. It is certainly not above the power of Satan to suggest thoughts to men; because otherwise he could not tempt them to sin. And if he can suggest any thoughts or ideas at all, doubtless imaginary ones, or ideas of things external, are not above his power*; for these are the lowest sorts of ideas. These ideas may be raised only by impressions made on the body, by moving the animal spirits, and impressing the brain. Abundant experience certainly shows, that alterations in the body will excite imaginary ideas in the mind; as in high fever, melancholy, &c. These external ideas are as much below the more intellectual exercises of the soul, as the body is a less noble part of man than the soul.

Again, there is not only nothing in the nature of these imaginations of outward appearances, from whence we can infer that they are above the power of the devil; but it is certain also that the devil can excite, and often hath excited such ideas. They were external ideas which he excited in the dreams and visions of the false prophets of old, who were under the influence of lying spirits†. And they were *external ideas* that he often excited in

* "Consider how difficult, yea and impossible it is to determine that such a voice, vision, or revelation is of God, and that Satan cannot feign or counterfeit it; seeing he hath left no certain marks by which we may distinguish one spirit from another." (Flavel's Causes and Cures of Mental Errors, Cause 14.)

† See Deut xiii. 1. 1 Kings xxii. 22. Is. xxviii. 7. Ezek. xiii. 7. Zech. xiii. 4.

the minds of the heathen priests, magicians and sorcerers, in their visions and ecstasies; and they were *external ideas* that he excited in the mind of the man Christ Jesus, when he shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them, when those kingdoms were not really in sight.

And if Satan, or any created being, has power to impress the mind with outward representations, then no particular sort of outward representations can be any evidence of a divine power. Is almighty power any more requisite to represent the shape of man to the imagination, than the shape of any thing else? Is there any higher kind of power necessary to form in the brain one bodily shape or colour than another? Does it need a power any more glorious to represent the form of the body of man, than the form of a chip or block; though it be of a very beautiful human body, with a sweet smile in his countenance, or arms open, or blood running from hands, feet, and side? May not that sort of power which can represent blackness or darkness to the imagination, also represent white and shining brightness? May not the power and skill which can well and exactly paint a straw, or a stick, on a piece of paper or canvass, only perhaps further improved, be sufficient to paint the body of a man, with great beauty and in royal majesty, or a magnificent city, paved with gold, full of brightness, and a glorious throne? So it is no more than the same sort of power, that is requisite to paint one as the other of these on the brain. The same sort of power that can put ink upon paper, can put on leaf gold. So that it is evident to a demonstration, if we suppose it to be in the devil's power to make any sort of external representation at all on the fancy—and never any one questioned it who believed there was a devil, that had any agency with mankind—that a created power may extend to all kinds of external appearances and ideas on the mind.

From hence it again clearly appears, that no such things have any thing in them that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine, in the sense in which it has been proved that all truly gracious experiences have. And though external ideas, through man's make and frame, ordinarily in some degree *attend* spiritual experiences; yet these ideas are no *part* of their *spiritual* experience, any more than the motion of the blood, and beating of the pulse. And though, undoubtedly, through men's infirmity in the present state, and especially through the weak constitution of some persons, gracious affections which are very strong, do excite lively ideas in the imagination; yet it is also undoubted, that when affections are *founded on* imaginations, which is often the case, those affections are merely natural and common, because they are built on a foundation that is not spiritual; and so are entirely different from gracious affections, which, as has been proved,

do evermore arise from those operations that are spiritual and divine.

These imaginations oftentimes raise the carnal affections of men to an exceeding great height*: and no wonder, when the

* There is a remarkable passage of Mr. John Smith, in his discourse on the shortness of a Pharisaic righteousness, p. 370, 371, of his select discourses, describing that sort of religion which is built on such a foundation as I am here speaking of. I cannot forbear transcribing the whole of it. Speaking of a sort of Christians, whose life is nothing but a strong energy of fancy, he says, "Lest their religion might too grossly discover itself to be nothing else but a piece of art, there may be sometimes such extraordinary motions stirred up within them, which may prevent all their own thoughts, that they may seem to be a true operation of the divine life; when yet all this is nothing else but the energy of their own self-love touched with some fleshly apprehensions of divine things, and excited by them. There are such things in our Christian religion, when a carnal, unhallowed mind, takes the chair, and gets the expounding of them, may seem very delicious to the fleshly appetites of men; some doctrines and notions of free grace and justification, the magnificent titles of sons of God and heirs of heaven, ever-flowing streams of joy and pleasure that blessed souls shall swim in to all eternity, a glorious paradise in the world to come, always springing up with well-scented and fragrant beauties, a new Jerusalem paved with gold, and bespangled with stars, comprehending in its vast circuit such numberless varieties, that a busy curiosity may spend itself about to all eternity. I doubt not but that sometimes the most fleshly and earthly men, that fly in their ambition to the pomp of this world, may be so ravished with the conceits of such things as these, that they may seem to be made partakers of the powers of the world to come. I doubt not but that they might be much exalted with them, as the souls of crazed or distracted persons seem to be sometimes, when their fancies play with those quick and nimble spirits, which a distempered frame of body, and unnatural heat in their heads, beget within them. Thus may these blazing comets rise up above the moon, and climb higher than the sun; which yet, because they have no solid consistence of their own, and are of a base and earthly alloy, will soon vanish and fall down again, being only borne up by an external force. They may seem to themselves to have attained higher than those noble Christians, that are gently moved by the natural force of true goodness: they seem to be *pleniores Deo*, (i. e. more full of God) than those that are really informed and actuated by the divine Spirit, and do move on steadily and constantly in the way towards heaven. As the seed that was sown in stony ground grew up, and lengthened out its blade faster, than that which was sown in the good and fruitful soil; and as the motions of our sense, and fancy, and passions, while our souls are in this mortal condition, sunk down deeply into the body, are many times more vigorous, and make stronger impressions upon us, than those of the higher powers of the soul, which are more subtle, and remote from these mixt animal perceptions: that devotion which is there seated, may seem to have more energy and life in it, than that which gently, and with a more delicate kind of touch, spreads itself upon the understanding, and from thence mildly derives itself through our wills and affections. But however the former may be more boisterous for a time, yet this is of a more consistent, spermatical, and thriving nature. For that proceeding indeed from nothing but a sensual and fleshly apprehension of God and true happiness, is but of a flitting and fading nature; and as the sensible powers and faculties grow more languid, or the sun of divine light shines more brightly upon us, these earthly devotions, like our culinary fires, will abate their heat and fervour. But a true celestial warmth will never be extinguished, because it is of an immortal nature; and being once seated vitally in the souls of men, it will regulate and order all the motions of it in a due manner; as the natural heat, radicated in the hearts of living creatures, hath the dominion and economy of the whole body under it. True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of passion; though these are too often mistaken for it, when in our jugglings in religion we cast a mist before our own eyes: but it is a new nature, informing the souls of men; it is a God-like frame of spirit, discovering itself most of all in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self-denial, universal love to God and all true goodness, without partiality, and without hypocrisy, whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing him to love him, and conform ourselves as much as may be to all that perfection which shines in him."

subjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting persuasion, that they are divine manifestations, which the great JEHOVAH immediately makes to their souls, therein giving them testimonies, in an extraordinary manner, of his high and peculiar favour.

Again, it is evident from what has been observed and proved of the manner in which gracious operations and effects in the heart are spiritual, supernatural and divine, that *the immediate suggesting of the words of scripture* to the mind, has nothing in it which is spiritual. I have had occasion to say something of this already; and what has been said may be sufficient to evince it: but if the reader bears in mind what has been said concerning the nature of spiritual influences and effects, it will be more abundantly manifest that this is no *spiritual* effect. For I suppose there is no person of common understanding, who will say, that the bringing of any words to the mind, is an effect of that nature, that it requires any new divine sense in the soul; or that the bringing of sounds or letters to the mind, is an effect of so high, holy, and excellent a nature, that it is impossible any created power should be the cause of it.

As the suggesting of scripture words to the mind, is only exciting in the mind ideas of certain sounds or letters, so it is only one way of exciting ideas in the imagination; for sounds and letters are external things, the objects of the external senses of seeing and hearing; therefore, by what has been already said concerning these external ideas, it is evident they are nothing spiritual: and if at any time the Spirit of God suggests these letters or sounds to the mind, this is a *common*, and not any *special* or *gracious* influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those affections which have this effect for their foundation, are no spiritual or gracious affections. But let it be remembered, that what I maintain is briefly this: when the immediate and extraordinary *manner of words of scripture coming to the mind*, is that which excites the affections, and is properly the foundation of them, then these affections are not spiritual. Indeed persons may have gracious affections going with scriptures which come to their minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those scriptures to excite them; when it is a spiritual sense or taste they have of the divine things contained in those scriptures, which excites their affections, and not the extraordinary and sudden manner of their entrance. They are affected with the instruction they receive from the words, and the view of the glorious things of God or Christ, which they contain; and not because the words came suddenly, as though God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this foundation; the words of some great promises of scripture come suddenly to their minds, as

though that moment they proceeded out of the mouth of God as spoken to them. Thus they take it as a voice from God, immediately revealing to them their happy circumstances, and promising them such and such great things: and this it is that affects and elevates them. There is no new or spiritual understanding of the divine *things contained in the scripture*, or new spiritual sense of the glorious things taught in that part of the Bible, going before their affection, and as the foundation of it! all the new understanding they have, or think they have, as the foundation of their affection, is this, that the words *are spoken to them*, because they come so suddenly and in so extraordinary a manner. And so this affection is built wholly on the sand; because it is built on a conclusion for which they have no foundation. And if it was true that God brought the words to their minds, and they certainly knew it, even that would not be *spiritual* knowledge; it may be without any spiritual sense. Balaam might *know* that the words which God suggested to him, were indeed suggested to him by *God*, and yet have no *spiritual* knowledge. So that *affections* built on that notion, that texts of scripture are sent immediately from God, are built on no spiritual foundation, and are vain and delusive. Persons who have their affections thus raised, if they should be asked, whether they have any new sense of the excellency of the things contained in those scriptures, would probably say, *Yes*, without hesitation: but it is true no otherwise than because they have taken up that notion, that the words are spoken immediately to them. That it is which makes them appear sweet, excellent, and wonderful. As for instance, supposing these were the words brought suddenly to their minds, *Fear not,———it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Having confidently taken up a notion that the words were immediately spoken from heaven to them, as an immediate revelation, that God was their father, and had given the kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the words seem sweet to them. Oh, say they, *what excellent things are contained in those words!* But the reason why the promise seems excellent to them, is only because they think it is made to them immediately: all the sense they have of any glory in them, is only from self-love, and from their own imagined interest in the words. They had not any sense of the holy nature of the kingdom of heaven, the spiritual glory of that God who gives it, and of his excellent grace to sinful men, in giving them this kingdom of his own good pleasure, preceding their imagined interest in these things, and their being affected by them. On the contrary, they first imagine they are interested in these things, then are highly affected with that consideration, and then can own these things to be excellent. So that the sudden and extraordinary way of the scrip-

ture's coming to their mind, is plainly the foundation of the whole; which is a clear evidence of the wretched delusion they are under.

The first comfort of many persons, and what they call their *conversion*, is after this manner: after awakening and terrors, some comfortable promise comes suddenly and wonderfully to their minds; and the manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God *to them*. This is the very foundation of their faith, hope, and comfort: from hence they take their first encouragement to trust in God and in Christ, because they think that God, by some scripture so brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promised them eternal life. But this is very absurd; for every one of common knowledge of religious principles, knows that it is God's manner to reveal his love to men, and their interest in the promises, *after* they have believed, and not *before*. They must first *believe*, before they have any *personal* and *possessive** interest in the promises to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth, and not of lies: he does not bring scriptures to men's minds in order to reveal to them that they have a personal and possessive interest in God's promises, when they have none, having not yet believed. For this would be the case, if God bringing texts of scripture to men's minds, in order to shew them *that their sins were forgiven*, or that it was God's pleasure to give them the kingdom, or any thing of that nature, went *before* and was the *foundation* of their first faith. No promise of the covenant of grace belongs *possessively* to any man, until he has first believed in Christ; for it is by faith alone that we become *thus* interested in Christ, and the promises of the new covenant made in him. Therefore, whatever spirit applies the promises of that covenant to a person who has not first believed, as being *already his*, (in the sense already mentioned) must be a lying spirit; and that faith which is first built on such an application of promises, is built upon a lie. God's manner is not to bring comfortable texts of scripture to give men *assurance* of his *peculiar* love, and that they shall be happy, before they have had a faith of *dependence*†.

* *Personal and possessive.* These words are added for the sake of perspicuity; for this *must* be the author's meaning. The promises, it is plain, must needs be *ours* by grant, exhibitory gift, or overture, and in that sense we have an interest in them, *before* we believe; and this is the very foundation of our *warrant* for believing.—W.

† Mr. Stoddard in his *Guide to Christ*, p. 8, says, that "somtimes men, after they have been in trouble awhile, have some promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing; and they hope God has accepted them." And says, that "In this case, the minister may tell them, that God never gives a faith of assurance, before he gives a faith of dependence; for he never manifests his love, until men are in a state of favour and reconciliation, which is by faith of dependence. When men have comfortable scriptures come to them, they are apt to take them as tokens of God's love; but men must be brought into Christ by accepting the offer of the gospel, before they are fit for such manifestations. God's method is, first to make the

And if the scripture which comes to a person's mind, be not so properly a promise, as an invitation; yet if he makes the sudden or unusual manner of its coming to his mind, the ground on which he believes that he is invited, it is not true faith; because it is built on that which is not the true ground of faith. True faith is built on no precarious foundation. But a determination that the words of such a particular text, were, by the immediate power of God, suggested to the mind, at such a time, as though then spoken and directed by God to him, because they came after such a manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious determination; and therefore is a false and sandy foundation for faith; and accordingly the faith which is built upon it is also false. The only certain foundation which any person has to believe that he is *invited* to partake of the blessings of the gospel, is, that the word of God declares that persons so qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it, is true and cannot lie. If a sinner be once convinced of the veracity of God, and that the scriptures are his word, he will need no more to convince and satisfy him that he is invited: for the scriptures are full of invitations to sinners, to the chief of sinners, to come and partake of the benefits of the gospel. He will not want of God any thing new; what he hath spoken already will be enough with him.

As the first comfort of many persons, and their affections at the time of their supposed conversion, are built on such grounds as these mentioned; so are their joys, hopes, and other affections afterwards. They have often particular words of scripture, sweet declarations and promises, suggested to them, which, by reason of the manner of their coming, they think are *immediate-*

soul accept of the offers of grace, and then to manifest his good estate unto him." And p. 76, speaking of them "that seem to be brought to lie at God's foot, and give an account of their closing with Christ, and that God has reveale l Christ to them, and drawn their hearts to him, and that they do accept of Christ," he says, "In this case, it is best to examine whether by that light that was given him, he saw Christ and salvation offered to him, or whether he saw that God loved him, or pardoned him, for the offer of grace and our acceptance goes before pardon, and therefore, much more, before the knowledge of it."

Mr. Shepard, in his *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part. II. p. 15, says that "Grace and the love of Christ (the fairest colours under the sun) may be pretended; but if you shall receive, under this appearance, that God witnesseth his love, first by an absolute promise, take heed there; for under this appearance you may as well bring in immediate revelations, and from thence come to forsake the scriptures."

And in Part I. p. 86, he says "Is Christ yours? Yes, I see it. How? By any word or promise! No: this is delusion." And p. 136, speaking of them that have no solid ground of peace, he reckons, "Those that content themselves with the revelation of the Lord's love, without the sight of any work, or not looking to it." And says presently after, "the testimony of the Spirit does not make a man more a Christian, but only evidenceth it; as it is the nature of a witness, not to make a thing to be true, but to clear and evidence it." And p. 140, speaking of them that say they have the witness of the Spirit, that makes a difference between them and hypocrites, he says, "The witness of the Spirit makes not the first difference: for first a man is a believer, and in Christ, and justified, called, and sanctified, before the Spirit does witness it; else the Spirit should witness to an untruth and lie."

ly sent from God to them, *at that time*. This they look upon as their *warrant*, the main *ground* of appropriating them to themselves, of their comfort, and the confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of conversation is carried on between God and them; and that God, from time to time, as it were, immediately speaks to them, and satisfies their doubts, testifies his love to them, promises them supports and supplies, and reveals to them clearly their interest in eternal blessings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a sudden and tumultuous kind of joys, mingled with strong confidence, and a high opinion of themselves; when indeed the main ground of these joys, and this confidence, is not any thing *contained in*, or *taught by these* scriptures, but the *manner of their coming to them;* which is a certain evidence of their delusion. There is no *particular* promise in the word of God made to the saint, or spoken to him, otherwise than *all* the promises of the covenant of grace are his, and are spoken to him*. Some indeed of these promises may be more peculiarly adapted to his case than others; and God by his Spirit may enable him better to understand than some others, and to have a greater sense of the preciousness, glory, and suitableness of the blessings contained in them.

But here, some may be ready to say, What, is there no such thing as any *particular* spiritual application of the promises of scripture by the Spirit of God? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing as a spiritual and saving application of the invitations and promises of scripture to the souls of men. But it is also certain, that the nature of it is wholly misunderstood by many persons, to the great ensnaring of their own souls. Hereby Satan acquires a vast advantage against them, against the interest of religion, and the church of God. The spiritual application of a scripture promise does not consist in its being immediately suggested to the thoughts by some extrinsic agent, and being borne into the mind with this strong apprehension, that it is particularly spoken and directed to them at that time. There is nothing of the hand of God evidenced in this effect, as events have proved in many notorious instances. It is a mean notion of a spiritual application of scripture; there is nothing in the

* Mr. Shepard in his *Sound Believer*, p. 159, of the late impression at Boston, says, "Embrace in thy bosom, not only some few promises, but all." And then he asks the question, "When may a Christian take a promise without presumption, as spoken to him? He answers, "The rule is very sweet, but certain; when he takes all the scripture, and embraces it as spoken unto him, he may then take any particular promise boldly. My meaning is, when a Christian takes hold, and wrestles with God for the accomplishment of all the promises of the New Testament, when he sets all the commands before him, as a compass and guide to walk after, when he applies all the threatenings to drive him nearer unto Christ the end of them. This no hypocrite can do; this the saints shall do; and by this they may know when the Lord speaks in particular unto them."

nature of it at all beyond the power of the devil; for there is nothing in the nature of the effect implying any vital communication of God. A truly spiritual application of the word of God is of a vastly higher nature; as much above the devil's power, as it is for him to apply the word of God to a dead corpse so as to raise it to life; or to a stone, to turn it into an angel. A spiritual application of the word of God consists in *applying it to the heart;* in spiritual, enlightening, sanctifying influences. A *spiritual application* of an invitation, or offer of the gospel, consists in *giving the soul a spiritual sense*, or relish, of the holy and divine blessings offered, and also the sweet and wonderful grace of the offerer, in making so gracious an overture, and of his holy excellency and faithfulness to fulfil what he offers, and his glorious sufficiency for it; so leading and drawing forth the heart to embrace the offer; and thus giving the man evidence of his title to, and *personal interest* in the thing offered. And so a *spiritual application* of the promises of scripture, for the comfort of the saints, consists in *enlightening their minds* to see the holy excellency and sweetness of the blessings promised, also the holy excellency of the promiser, his faithfulness and sufficiency; thus drawing forth their hearts to embrace the promiser, and thing promised; and by this means, giving the sensible actings of grace, enabling them to see their grace, and so their *possessive* title to the promise. An application not consisting in this divine sense and enlightening of the mind, but consisting only in the word's being borne into thoughts, as if immediately then spoken, so making persons believe, on no other foundation, that the promise is theirs; is a blind application, and belongs to the spirit of darkness, and not of light,

When persons have their affections raised after this manner, those affections are really not raised by the word of God; the scripture is not the foundation of them; it is not any thing contained in those scriptures which come to their minds, that raise their affections; but truly that effect, *viz.* the *strange manner* of the word being suggested to their minds, and a proposition from thence taken up by them, which indeed is not contained in that scripture, nor in any other; as that *his* sins are forgiven him, or that it is the Father's good pleasure to give *him in particular* the kingdom, or the like. There are propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that persons of such and such qualifications are forgiven and beloved of God: but there are none declaring that such and such *particular* persons, independent on an any previous knowledge of qualifications, are forgiven and beloved of God. Therefore, when any person is comforted, and affected by any such proposition, it is by another word, a word newly coined,

and not any word of God contained in the Bible*. And thus many persons are vainly affected and deluded.

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, *that no revelation of secret facts by immediated suggestion*, is any thing spiritual and divine, in that sense wherein gracious effects and operations are so. By *secret facts*, I mean things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which do not appear to the senses, nor are known by any argumentation, nor any other way, but only by immediate suggestion of ideas to the mind. Thus for instance, if it should be revealed to me, that the next year this land would be invaded by a fleet from France, or that such and such persons would then be converted, or that I myself should then be converted—not by enabling me to argue these events from any thing which now appears in providence, but—immediately suggesting, in an extraordinary manner, that these things would come to pass: or if it should be revealed to me, that this day there is a battle fought between the armies of such and such powers in Europe, or that such a prince in Europe was this day converted, or is now in a converted state, or that one of my neighbours is converted, or that I myself am converted; not by having any other evidence of these facts, but an immediate extraordinary suggestion or excitation of these ideas, and a strong impression of them upon my mind: this is a revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestion, as much as if the facts were future; for the facts being past, present, or future, alters not the case, as long as they are *secret*, hidden from my senses and reason, and not spoken of in scripture, nor known by me any other way than by *immediate suggestion*. If I have it revealed to me, that such a revolution is come to pass this day in the Ottoman empire, it is the very same sort of revelation, as if it were revealed to me that such a revolution would come to pass there this day come twelve month; because, though one is present and the other future, yet both are equally *hidden* from me, any other way than by immediate revelation. When Samuel told Saul that the asses which he went to seek were found, and that his father had left caring for the asses, and sorrowed for him; this was by the same kind of revelation, as that by which he told

* "Some Christians have rested with a work without Christ, which is abominable: but after a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is first not to judge from the word. For though there is a word, which may give a man *dependence* on Christ, without feeling any work, nay, when he feels none, as absolute promises; yet no word giving *assurance*, but that which is made to some work, *He that believeth, or is poor in spirit*, &c. until that work is seen, has no assurance from that promise." *Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 86.

"If God should tell a saint that he has grace, he might know it by believing the word of God: but it is not in this way that godly men do know that they have grace; it is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God does not testify it to particular persons." *Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion*, p. 54, 55.

Saul, that in the plain of Tabor, there should meet him three men going up to God to Bethel, (1 Sam. x. 2, 3.) though one of these things was future, and the other was not. So when Elisha told the king of Israel the words that the king of Syria spake in his bed-chamber, it was by the same kind of revelation with that by which he foretold many things to come.

It is evident that this revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestion, has nothing of the nature of a spiritual and divine operation, in the sense fore-mentioned. There is nothing at all in the nature of the ideas themselves, excited in the mind, that is divinely excellent, above the ideas of natural men; though the *manner* of exciting the ideas be extraordinary. In those things which are spiritual, as has been shewn, not only *the manner of producing the effect*, but *the effect wrought* is divine, and so vastly above all that can be in an unsanctified mind. Now simply the having an idea of facts, setting aside the manner of producing those ideas, is nothing beyond what the minds of wicked men are susceptible of, without any goodness in them; and they all either have or will have, the knowledge of the greatest and most important facts that have been, are, or shall be.

And as to the extraordinary *manner* of producing the perception of facts, even by immediate suggestion, there is nothing in it, but what the minds of natural men are capable of; as is manifest in Balaam, and others spoken of in the scripture. And therefore it appears that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate suggestion of secret facts that is spiritual, in the sense in which it has been proved that gracious operations are so. If there be nothing in the ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a mind not sanctified, then God can put them into the mind *by immediate power*, without sanctifying it. As there is nothing in the idea of a *rainbow* of a holy and divine nature; so God, if he pleases, and when he pleases, *immediately, and in an extraordinary manner*, may excite that idea in an unsanctified mind. So also, as there is nothing in the idea or knowledge that such particular persons are forgiven and accepted of God, and entitled to heaven, but what *unsanctified* minds may have, and will have concerning many at the day of judgment; so God can if he pleases, extraordinarily and immediately suggest this to, and impress it upon an unsanctified mind now. There is no principle wanting in an unsanctified mind in order to make it capable of such an impression; nor is there any thing in them necessarily to prevent such a suggestion.

And if these suggestions of secret facts be attended with *texts of scripture*, immediately and extraordinarily brought to mind, about other facts that seem in some respects similar; that does not make the operation to be of a spiritual and divine nature.—

For that suggestion of words of scripture is no more divine, than the suggestion of the facts themselves; as has been just now demonstrated; and two effects together, which are neither of them spiritual, cannot make up one complex effect spiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already shewn, that those affections which are properly founded on such immediate suggestions, of secret facts, are not gracious affections. Not but that it is possible that such suggestions may *be the occasion*, or *accidental cause* of gracious affections; for so may a mistake and delusion; but it is never properly the *foundation* of gracious affections: for gracious affections, as has been shewn, are all the effects of an influence and operation which is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. But there are many affections, and high affections, which have such revelations for their very foundation. They look upon these as spiritual discoveries; but they are a gross delusion; and this delusion is truly the spring whence their affections flow.

Here it may be proper to observe, from what has been said, that what many persons call the *witness of the Spirit*, that they are the children of God, has nothing in it spiritual and divine; and consequently that the affections built upon it, are vain and delusive. That which many call the witness of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate suggestion and impression of that fact, otherwise secret, that they are made the children of God, and so that their sins are pardoned, and that God has given them a title to heaven. This kind of knowledge, *viz.* knowing that a certain person, is converted, and delivered from hell, and entitled to heaven, is no divine sort of knowledge in itself. This sort of fact requires no more divine suggestion, in order to impress it on the mind, than what Balaam had impressed on his mind. It requires no higher sort of idea for a man to have the apprehension of his *own* conversion impressed upon him, than to have the apprehension of his *neighbour's* conversion, in like manner. God, if he pleased, might impress the knowledge of this fact, that he had forgiven his neighbour's sins, and given him a title to heaven, as well as any other fact, without any communication of his holiness. The excellency and importance of the fact, does not at all hinder a natural man's mind being susceptible of an immediate suggestion and impression of it. Balaam had as important facts as this immediately impressed on his mind, without any gracious influence; particularly, the coming of Christ, his setting up his glorious kingdom, the blessedness of the spiritual Israel in his peculiar favour, and their happiness living and dying. Yea, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, had God's special favour to Abraham, revealed to him, Gen. xx. 6, 7. He revealed to Laban his special favour to Jacob, see Gen. xxxi. 24. and Psal. cv. 15.

And if a truly good man should have an immediate revelation from God, in like manner, concerning his favour to his neighbour, or himself, would it be any higher kind of influence? Would it be any more than a common influence of God's Spirit, as the gift of prophecy, and all revelation by immediate suggestion is? See 1 Cor. xiii. 2. And though it be true, that a natural man cannot have an individual suggestion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, because it is not true; yet that does not arise from the nature of the influence, as too high for him. The influence which immediately suggests this fact, when it is true, is of no different kind from that which immediately suggests other true facts: and so the kind and nature of the influence, is not above what is common to natural men.

But this is a mean ignoble notion of the witness of the Spirit of God given to his dear children, to suppose that there is nothing in the *nature* of that influence, but what is common to natural men, altogether unsanctified, and the children of hell; and that therefore the gift itself has nothing of the holy nature, or vital communication of that Spirit. This notion greatly debases that most exalted kind of operation which there is in the true witness of the spirit*. That which is called *the witness of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. is elsewhere in the New Testament called *the seal of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13. and iv. 13. alluding to the seal of princes, annexed to the instrument, by which they advanced any of their subjects to some high honour and dignity, as a token of their special favour. Which is an evidence that the influence of the Spirit of the Prince of princes, in sealing his favourites, is far from being of a common kind; and that there is no effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable, and distinguishing of divinity. Nothing is more royal than the royal seal; nothing more sacred to a prince, and more peculiarly de-

* The late venerable Stoddard in his younger time, falling in with the opinion of some others, received this notion of the witness of the Spirit, by way of immediate suggestion: but in the latter part of his life, when he had more thoroughly weighed things, and had more experience, he entirely rejected it; as appears by his treatise of the nature of saving conversion, p. 34. "The Spirit of God doth not testify to particular persons, that they are godly. Some think that the Spirit of God doth testify it to some; and they ground it on Rom. viii. 16. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* They think the Spirit reveals it by giving an inward testimony to it; and some godly men think they have had experience of it: but they may easily mistake; when the Spirit of God doth eminently stir up a Spirit of faith, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, it is easy to mistake it for a testimony. And that is not the meaning of Paul's words. The Spirit reveals things to us, by opening our eyes to see what is revealed in the word; but the Spirit doth not reveal new truths, not revealed in the word. The Spirit discovers the grace of God in Christ, and thereby draws forth special actings of faith and love, which are evidential; but it doth not work in way of testimony. If God do but help us to receive the revelations in the word, we shall have comfort enough without new revelations."

noting what belongs to him; it being the very design of it, to be the most peculiar stamp and confirmation of the royal authority. It is the great note of distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the king, or belongs to him, may be known from every thing else. And therefore undoubtedly the seal of the great King of heaven and earth enstamped on the heart, is something high and holy in its own nature, some excellent communication from the infinite fountain of divine beauty and glory; and not merely making known a secret fact by revelation or suggestion; which is a sort of influence of the Spirit of God, of which the children of the devil have often been the subjects. The seal of the Spirit is an effect of the Spirit of God on the heart, of which natural men while such, can form no manner of notion. Rev. ii. 17. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.* There is all reason to suppose that what is here spoken of, is the same evidence, or blessed token of special favour, which is elsewhere called the *seal of the Spirit.*

What has misled many in their notion of that influence of the Spirit of God of which we are speaking, is the word WITNESS, its being called *the witness* of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it to be not any work of the Spirit upon the heart, giving evidence from whence men may argue that they are the children of God, but an inward immediate suggestion, as though God inwardly spoke to the man, and told him that he was his child, by a kind of secret voice, or impression. The manner in which the word *witness*, or *testimony*, is often used in the New Testament, viz.—holding forth evidence from whence a thing may be argued and proved to be true. Thus, Heb. ii. 4. God is said to *bear witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.* Now these miracles, are called God's witness, not because they are of the nature of *assertions*, but *evidences* and proofs. So Acts xiv. 3. *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* And John v. 36. *But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* Again, chap. x. 25. *The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.* So the water and the blood are said to bear witness, 1 John, v. 8. not that they *asserted* any thing, but they were evidences. So God's works of providence, in rain and fruitful seasons, are *witnesses* of God's being and goodness, *i. e.* they were *evidences* of these things. And when the scripture speaks of the *seal* of the Spirit, it is an expression which proper-

ly denotes—not an immediate voice or suggestion, but—some work or effect of the Spirit, left as a divine mark upon the soul, to be an evidence, by which God's children might be known. The seals of princes were their distinguishing marks: and thus the seal of God is his mark, Rev. vii. 3. *Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;* Ezek. ix. 4. *Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof.* When God sets his seal on a man's heart by his Spirit, there is some holy stamp, some image impressed, and left upon the heart by the Spirit, as by the seal upon the wax. And this holy stamp, or impressed image, exhibiting clear evidence to the conscience, that the subject of it is the child of God, is the very thing which in scripture is called *the seal of the Spirit*, and *the witness*, or *evidence of the Spirit*. And this mark enstamped by the Spirit on God's children, is his own image. That is the evidence by which they are known to be God's children; they have the image of their father stamped upon their hearts by the spirit of adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two things, *viz.* the *image*, and the *name* of the person whose seal it was. Therefore when Christ says to his spouse, Cant viii. 6. *Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:* it is as much as to say, let my name and image remain impressed there. The seals of princes, moreover, were wont to bear their *image;* so that what they set their seal and royal mark upon, had their image left on it. It was their manner also to have their image engraven on their jewels and precious stones; the image of Augustus engraven on a precious stone, was used as the seal of the Roman emperors, in the times of Christ and the apostles*. The saints are the jewels of Jesus Christ, the great Potentate, who possesses the empire of the universe: and these jewels have his image enstamped upon them by his royal signet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the scripture means by the seal of the Spirit; especially when it is fair and plain to the eye of conscience; which is what the scripture calls *our spirit*. This is truly an effect that is *spiritual*, *supernatural* and *divine*. This is in itself of a holy nature, being a communication of the divine nature and beauty. That kind of influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this stamp upon the heart, is such as no natural man can have. If there were any such thing as a witness of the Spirit by immediate suggestion or revelation, this would be vastly more noble and excellent, and as much above it as the heaven is above the earth. This the devil cannot imitate†.

* See Chamber's Dictionary, under the word ENGRAVING.

† Mr. Shepard is abundant in militating against the notion of men's knowing

The *seal of the Spirit* is called the *earnest of the Spirit*, in the scripture. 2 Cor. i. 22. *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* And Eph. i. 13, 14. *In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* Now the earnest is part of the money agreed for given in hand, as a token of the whole to be paid in due time; a part of the promised inheritance granted now, in token of full possession of the whole hereafter. But surely that kind of communication of the Spirit of God, which is of the nature of eternal glory, is the highest and most excellent kind of communication. It is something in its own nature spiritual, holy, and divine; and therefore

their good estate by an immediate witness of the Spirit, without judging by any effect or work of the Spirit wrought on the heart, as an evidence and proof that persons are the children of God. (Parab. I. P. 134, 135, 137, 176, 177, 215, 216. P. II. 168, 169.

Again, in his *Sound Believer*, there is a long discourse of sanctification as the chief evidence of justification, from p. 221, for many pages following; I shall transcribe but a very small part of it. "Tell me, how you will know that you are justified. You will say, by the testimony of the Spirit. And cannot the same Spirit shine upon your graces, and witness that you are sanctified, as well? 1 John iv. 13, 24. 1 Cor. ii. 12. Can the Spirit make the one clear to you, and not the other? Oh beloved, it is a sad thing, to hear such questions, and such cold answers also, that sanctification *possibly may be* an evidence. May be! Is it not certain?

Mr. Flavel also much opposes this notion of the witness of the Spirit by immediate revelation. *Sacramental Meditations, med.* 4, speaking of the sealing of the Spirit, he says, "In sealing the believer, he doth not make use of an audible voice, nor the ministry of angels, nor immediate and extraordinary revelations; but he makes use of his own graces, implanted in our hearts, and his own promises, written in the scripture: and in this method, he usually brings the doubting trembling heart of a believer to rest and comfort." Again, *ibid.* "Assurance is produced in our souls by the reflexive acts of faith: the Spirit helps us to reflect upon what hath been done by him formerly upon our hearts; *hereby we know that we know him*, 1 John ii. 3. To know that we know, is a reflex act. Now it is impossible there should be a reflex, before there hath been a direct act. No man can have the evidence of his faith, before the habit is infused, and the vital act performed. The object matter, to which the Spirit seals, is his own sanctifying operation." Afterwards, *ibid.* he says, "Immediate ways of the Spirit's sealing are ceased. No man may now expect, by any new revelation, or sign from heaven, by any voice, or extraordinary inspiration, to have his salvation sealed; but must expect that mercy in God's ordinary way and method, searching the scriptures; examining our own hearts, and waiting on the Lord in prayer. The learned Gerson gives an instance of one that had been long upon the borders of despair, and at last sweetly assured and settled: he answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione; not by any new revelation*, but by subjecting my understanding to, and comparing my heart with the written word; and Mr. Roberts, in his treatise of *the covenants*, speaks of another, that so vehemently panted after the sealings and assurance of the love of God to his soul, that for a long time he earnestly desired some voice from heaven; and sometimes walking in the solitary fields, earnestly desired some miraculous voice from the trees or stones there. This was denied him: but in time, a better was afforded, in a scriptural way." Again, *ibid*, "This method of sealing, is beyond all other methods in the world. For in miraculous voices and inspirations, it is possible there may *subesse falsum, be found some cheat*, or impostures of the devil: but the Spirit's witness in the heart, suitable to the revelation in the scripture, cannot deceive us."

high above any thing of the nature of inspiration, or revelation of hidden facts by suggestion of the Spirit of God, which many natural men have had. What is the earnest and beginning of glory, but grace itself, especially in the more lively and clear exercises of it? It is not prophecy, nor tongues, nor knowledge, but that more excellent thing, *charity that never faileth*, which is a beginning of the light, sweetness, and blessedness of heaven, that world of love or charity. Grace is the seed of glory; the earnest of the future inheritance. What is the beginning or earnest of eternal life in the soul, but spiritual life? and what is that but grace? The inheritance that Christ has purchased for the elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary gifts, but in his vital indwelling in the heart, exerting and communicating himself there, in his own proper, holy or divine nature. The Father provides the Saviour, and the purchase is made of him; the Son is the purchaser and the price; and the Holy Spirit is the great blessing or inheritance purchased, as is intimated, Gal. iii. 13, 14. and hence the Spirit is often spoken of as the sum of the blessings promised in the gospel*. This inheritance was the grand legacy which Christ left his disciples and church, in his last will and testament, John, chap. xiv. xv. xvi. This is the sum of the blessings of eternal life, which shall be given in heaven†. It is through the vital communications and indwelling of the Spirit, that the saints have all their light, life, holiness, beauty, and joy in heaven: and it is through the vital communications and indwelling of the same Spirit, that the saints have all light, life, holiness, beauty and comfort on earth; but only communicated in less measure. And this vital indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, in this less measure, is *the earnest of the Spirit, the earnest of the future inheritance, and the first-fruits of the Spirit*, as the apostle call it, Rom. viii. 22. where, by *the first-fruits of the Spirit*, the apostle undoubtedly means the same vital gracious principle, that he speaks of in all the preceding part of the chapter, which he calls Spirit, and sets in opposition to flesh or corruption. Therefore this *earnest* of the Spirit, and *first-fruits* which has been shewn to be the same with the *seal* of the Spirit, is his vital, gracious, sanctifying influence, and not any immediate suggestion or revelation of facts‡.

* "Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4. and chap. ii. 38, 39. Gal. iii. 14. Eph. i. 13.

† Compare John vii. 37, 38, 39, and John iv. 14, with Rev. xxi. 6. and xxii. 1, 17.

‡ "After a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is not to judge by the Spirit. For the apostle makes the *earnest* of the Spirit to be the *seal*. Now, earnest is part of the money bargained for; the beginning of heaven, of the light and life of it. He that sees not that the Lord is his by that, sees no God his at all. Oh therefore, do not look for a spirit, without a word to reveal, nor a word to reveal, without seeing and feeling of some work first. I thank the Lord, I do but pity those that think otherwise. If a sheep of Christ, oh, wander not. Shepard's *Par.* P. I. p. 86.

And indeed the apostle, when (Rom. viii. 16.) he speaks of the Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God, sufficiently explains himself. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: for ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.* Here, what the apostle says, if we take it together, plainly shews, that what he has respect to, when he speaks of the Spirit giving us *witness* or *evidence* that we are God's children, is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a spirit of adoption, or of a child, disposing us to behave towards God as to a Father. And what is that, but the spirit of love? There are two kind sof spirits of which the apostle speaks, *the spirit of bondage*, that is *fear;* and *the spirit of adoption*, and that is *love.* The apostle says, we have not received the Spirit of bondage, or of slaves, which is a spirit of fear; but we have received the more ingenuous, noble spirit of children, a spirit of love, which naturally disposes us to go to God, as children to a father. And this is the witness which the Spirit of God gives us that we are children. This is the plain sense of the apostle. The Spirit of bondage works by fear, the slave fears the rod; but love cries *Abba, Father;* it disposes us to go to God, and behave ourselves as children. So that the witness of the Spirit of which the apostle speaks, is far from being any whisper, or immediate suggestion; but is that gracious, holy effect of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the saints, the disposition and temper of children, appearing in sweet child-like love to God, which casts out fear. It is plain the apostle speaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the hearts of the saints, as a gracious principle, in opposition to the flesh or corruption; as in the words that immediately introduce this passage, ver. 13. *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.*

Indeed, it is past doubt with me, that the apostle has a more special respect to the spirit of grace, or of love, or the spirit of a child, in its more lively actings; for it is *perfect love* or *strong love* only, which so witnesses, or evidences that we are children, as to cast out fear, and wholly deliver from the spirit of bondage. The strong and lively exercises of evangelical, humble love to God, give clear evidence of the soul's relation to God, as his child; which very greatly and directly satisfies the soul. And though it be far from true, that the soul in this case judges only by an immediate witness, without any sign or evidence; yet the saint stands in no need of multiplied signs, or any long reasoning upon them. And though the sight of his *relative union* with God,

and being in his favour, is not without a medium, *viz.* his love; yet his sight of the *union of his heart* to God is immediate. Love, the bond of union, is seen intuitively; the saint sees and feels plainly the union between his soul and God; it is so strong and lively, that he cannot doubt of it. And hence he is assured that he is a child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a child-like relation to God, when he plainly sees a child-like union between God and his soul, and hence cries *Abba, Father.*

And whereas the apostle says, the Spirit bears witness *with our spirits:* by *our spirit* here, is meant our *conscience*, which is called the spirit of man; Prov. xx. 27. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.* We elsewhere read of the witness of this Spirit, or of conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.* And 1 John iii. 19—21. *And hereby do we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* When the apostle Paul speaks of the Spirit of God bearing *witness with our spirit*, he does not mean two separate, collateral, independent witnesses, but that by one, we receive the witness of the other. The Spirit of God gives the evidence, by infusing and shedding abroad the love of God, the spirit of a child, in the heart; and our spirit, or our conscience, receives and declares this evidence for our rejoicing.

Many mischiefs have arisen from that false and delusive notion of the witness of the Spirit, that it is a kind of inward voice, suggestion, or declaration from God to a man, that he is beloved, pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a text of scripture; for many have been the false and vain (though very high) affections that have arisen from hence. It is to be feared that multitudes of souls have been eternally undone by it; I have therefore insisted the longer on this head.—But I proceed now to a second characteristic of gracious affections.

SECT. II.

The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves; and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or self-interest.

I say, that the supremely excellent nature of divine things is the *first*, or *primary and original* objective foundation of the spiritual affections of true saints; for I do not suppose that all relation which divine things bear to themselves, and their own particular interest, are wholly excluded from all influence in their gracious affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a secondary and consequential influence in those affections that are truly holy and spiritual; as I shall shew by and by.

It was before observed, that the affection of love is as it were the fountain of all affection; and particularly, that Christian love is the fountain of all gracious affections. Now the divine *excellency* of God, and of Jesus Christ, the word of God, his works, ways, &c. is the primary reason, why a true saint loves these things; and not any supposed *interest* that he has in them, or any conceived benefit that he has received, or shall receive from them.

Some say that divine love arises from *self-love;* and that it is impossible in the nature of things, for any man to love God, or any other being, but that love to *himself* must be the foundation of it. But I humbly suppose, it is for want of consideration they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his glory, or the enjoyment of him, desires these things as his own happiness; the glory of God, and the beholding and the enjoying of his perfections, are considered as things *agreeable to him*, tending to make him happy; he places his happiness in them, and desires them as objects which, if obtained, would fill him with delight and joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from self-love, or a desire of his own happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and inquire how the man came *to place his happiness* in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's perfections. There is no doubt, but that after God's glory, and beholding his perfections, are become *agreeable* to him, he will desire them, as he desires his own happiness. But how came these things to be so *agreeable* to him, that he esteems it his highest happiness to glorify God, &c.? is not this the fruit of love? Must not a man first *love* God, or have his heart united to him,

before he will esteem God's good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God, as his happiness? It is not strong arguing, because *after* a man has his heart united to God in love, and, *as a fruit of this*, he desires his glory and enjoyment as his own happiness, that therefore a desire of this happiness must needs be the *cause and foundation* of his love, unless it be strong arguing, that because a father begat a son, therefore his son certainly begat him. If *after* a man loves God, it will be a *consequence and fruit of this*, that even love to his own happiness will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very exercise of self-love, went *before* his love to God, and that his love to God was a *consequence and fruit of that*. Something else, entirely distinct from self-love, might be the cause of this, *viz.* a change made in the views of his mind, and relish of his heart; whereby he apprehends a beauty, glory, and supreme good, in God's nature, as it is in itself. This may be the thing that first draws his heart to him, and causes his heart to be united to him, prior to all considerations of his own interest or happiness, although after this, and as a fruit of it, he necessarily seeks his interest and happiness in God.

There is a kind of love or affection towards persons or things, which *does properly arise* from self-love. A preconceived relation to himself, or some respect already manifested by another to him, or some benefit already received or depended on, *is truly the first foundation* of his love; what precedes any relish of, or delight in, the nature and qualities inherent in the being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the first thing that draws a man's benevolence to another, is the beholding of those qualifications and properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves, love arises in a very different manner, than when it first arises from some *gift* bestowed by another, as a judge loves and favours a man that has bribed him; or from the *relation* he supposes another has to him, as a man who loves his child. When love to another arises thus, it arises truly and properly from self-love.

That kind of affection to God or Jesus Christ, which thus properly arises from self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual love; as appears from what has been said already. For self-love is a principle entirely natural, and as much in the hearts of devils as angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere result of it, can be supernatural and divine, in the manner before described*. Christ plainly speaks of this kind of love, as what is nothing beyond the love of wicked men, Luke vi. 32. *If*

* "There is a natural love to Christ, as to one that doth thee good, and for thine own ends; and spiritual, for himself, whereby the Lord only is exalted." SHEPARD'S *Par. of the Ten Virgins*, P. I. p. 25.

ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And the devil himself knew that a mercenary respect to God, only for benefits received or depended on, (which is all one) is worthless in the sight of God; Job i. 9, 10. *Doth Job serve God for nought? hast thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, &c.?* God would never have implicitly allowed the objection to have been good, in case the accusation had been true, by allowing that matter to be tried, and Job to be so dealt with, that it might appear in the event, whether Job's respect to God was thus mercenary or no. Whereas the proof of the goodness of his respect was put upon that issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first foundation of a true love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of his nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a man, or any creature lovely, is his excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief ground of true love, is his excellency. God's nature, or the divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea it is infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself. But how can that be *true love* of this excellent and lovely nature, which is not built on the foundation of *its true loveliness*? how can that be true love of beauty and brightness, which is not for beauty and brightness' sake? how can that be a true prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the sake of its worthiness and preciousness? This infinite excellency of the divine nature, as it is in itself, is the true ground of all that is good in God in any respect; but how can a man truly love God, without loving him for that excellency, which is the foundation of all that is good or desirable in him? They whose affection to God is founded first on his *profitableness* to them, begin at the wrong end; they regard God only for the utmost limit of the stream of divine good, where it touches them, and reaches their interest. They have no respect to that infinite glory of God's nature, which is the original good, and the true fountain of all good, and of loveliness of every kind.

A natural principle of self-love may be the foundation of great affections towards God and Christ, without seeing any thing of the beauty and glory of the divine nature. There is a certain gratitude that is a mere natural thing. Gratitude is one of the natural affections, as well as anger; and there is a gratitude that arises from self-love, very much in the same manner that anger does. Anger in men is an affection excited *against*, or in opposition to another, for something in him that crosses self-love: gratitude is an affection one has *towards* another, for loving or gratifying him, or for something in him that suits self-love. And there

may be a kind of gratitude, without any true or proper love; as there may be anger without hatred; as in parents towards their children, with whom they may be angry, and yet at the same time have a strong habitual love to them. Of this gratitude Christ declares, (Luke vi.) *Sinners love those that love them;* even the publicans, who were some of the most carnal and profligate sort of men, (Matth. v. 46.) This is the principle wrought upon by bribery, in unjust judges; and which even the brute beasts exercise; a dog will love his master that is kind to him. And we see in innumerable instances, that mere nature is sufficient to excite gratitude in men, or to affect their hearts with thankfulness to others for kindnesses received; and sometimes towards them against whom at the same time they have an habitual enmity. Thus Saul was once and again greatly affected, and even dissolved with gratitude towards David, for sparing his life; and yet remained an habitual enemy to him. And as men, from mere nature, may be thus affected towards men, so they may towards God. Nothing hinders, but that the same self-love may work after the same manner towards God, as towards men. And we have manifest instances of it in scripture; as indeed the children of Israel, *who sang God's praises* at the Red sea, *but soon forgat his works.* Naaman the Syrian was greatly affected with the miraculous cure of his leprosy. His heart was engaged thenceforward to worship the God who had healed him, excepting when it would expose him to be ruined in his temporal interest. So was Nebuchadnezzar greatly affected with God's goodness to him, in restoring him to his reason and kingdom, after his dwelling with the beasts.

Gratitude being thus a natural principle, ingratitude is so much the more vile and heinous; because it shews a dreadful prevalence of wickedness, when it even overbears, and suppresses the better principles of human nature. It is mentioned as an evidence of the high degree of wickedness in many of the heathen, that they were *without natural affection*, Rom. ii. 31. But that the want of gratitude, or natural affection, are evidences of a high degree of *vice*, is no argument that all gratitude and natural affection, has the nature of *virtue*, or *saving grace*.

Self-love, through the exercise of a mere natural gratitude, may be the foundation of a sort of love to God many ways. A kind of love may arise from a false notion of God, that men have some way imbibed; as though he were *only* goodness and mercy, and no revenging justice; or as though the exercises of his goodness were *necessary*, and not free and sovereign; or as though his goodness were *dependent* on what is in them, and as it were constrained by them. Men on such grounds as these, may love a God of their own forming in their imaginations, when they are far from loving such a God as reigns in heaven.

Again, self-love may be the foundation of an affection in men towards God, through a great *insensibility* of their state with regard to God, and for want of conviction of conscience to make them sensible how dreadfully they have provoked him to anger. They have no sense of the heinousness of sin, as against God, and of the infinite and terrible opposition of the holy nature of God against it. Having formed in their minds such a God as suits them, and thinking him to be such an one as themselves, who favours and agrees with them, they may like him very well, and feel a sort of love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And men's affections may be much moved towards God from self-love, by some remarkable outward benefits received from him; as it was with Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, and the children of Israel at the Red sea.

Again, a very high affection towards God, may, and often does arise in men, from an opinion of the favour and love of God to *them*, as the first foundation of their love to him. After awakenings and distress, through fears of hell, they may suddenly get a notion, through some impression on their imagination, or immediate suggestion with or without texts of scripture, or by some other means, that God loves *them*, has forgiven their sins, and made them his children; and this is the first thing that causes their affections to flow towards God and Jesus Christ; and then, upon this foundation, many things in God may appear lovely to them, and Christ may seem excellent. And if such persons are asked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself? they would perhaps readily answer, Yes; when indeed, if the matter be strictly examined, this good opinion of God was purchased, and paid for, in the distinguishing and infinite benefits they imagined they received from God. They allow God to be lovely in himself no otherwise, than that he has forgiven and accepted them, loves them above most in the world, and has engaged to improve all his infinite power and wisdom in preferring, dignifying, and exalting them, and will do for them just as they would have him. When once they are firm in this apprehension, it is easy to own God and Christ to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. It is easy for them to own Christ to be a lovely person, and the best in the world, when they are first firm in the notion, that he, though Lord of the universe, is captivated with love to them, has his heart swallowed up in them, prizes them far beyond most of their neighbours, has loved them from eternity, and died for them, and will make them reign in eternal glory with him in heaven. When this is the case with carnal men, their very lusts will make him seem lovely; pride itself will prejudice them in favour of that which they call Christ. Selfish, proud man, natu-

rally calls that lovely which greatly contributes to his interest, and gratifies his ambition.

And as this sort of persons begin, so they go on. Their affections are raised, from time to time, primarily on this foundation of self-love, and a conceit of God's love to them. Many have a false notion of communion with God, as though it were carried on by impulses, and whispers, and external representations, immediately made to their imagination. These things they take to be manifestations of God's great love to them, and evidences of their high exaltation above others; and so their affections are often renewedly set a-going.

Whereas the exercises of true and holy love in the saints arise in another way. They do not first see that God loves *them*, and then see that he is lovely; but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious; their hearts are first captivated with this view, and the exercises of their love are wont, from time to time, to begin here, and to arise primarily from these views; and then, consequentially, they see God's love, and great favour to them*. The saints affections begin with *God;* and self-love has a hand in these affections consequentially, and secondarily only. On the contrary, false affections begin with *self*, and an acknowledgment of an excellency in God, and an affectedness with it, is only consequential and dependent. In the love of the true saint, God is the lowest foundation; the love of the excellency of his nature is the foundation of all the affections which come afterwards, wherein self-love is concerned as an handmaid. On the contrary, the hypocrite lays *himself* at the bottom of all, as the first foundation, and lays on God as the superstructure; and even his acknowledgment of God's glory itself, depends on his regard to his private interest.

Self-love may not only influence men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's kindness to them separately; but also with God's kindness to them, as parts of a community. A natural principle of self-love, without any other, may be sufficient to make a man concerned for the interest of the *nation* to which he belongs: as for instance, in the present *war*, self-love may make natural men rejoice at the successes of our nation, and sorry for their disadvantages, they being concerned as members of the body. The same natural principles may extend even to the world of mankind, and might be affected with the benefits the inhabitants of the earth have, beyond those of the inhabitants of

* "There is a seeing of Christ after a man believes, which is Christ in his love, &c. But I speak of that first sight of him that precedes the second act of faith: and it is an intuitive, or real sight of him, as he is in his glory." SHEPARD's *Par. of the Ten Virgins*. Part I. p. 74.

other planets; if we knew that such there were, and knew how it was with them. So this principle may cause men to be affected with the benefits mankind have received beyond the fallen angels; with the wonderful goodness of God in giving his Son to die for fallen man, with the marvellous love of Christ in suffering such great things for us, and with the great glory they hear God has provided in heaven for us. Looking on themselves as persons concerned, interested, and so highly favoured; the same principle of natural gratitude may influence men here, as in the case of personal benefits.

But these things by no means imply, that all gratitude to God is a mere natural thing, and that there is no such thing as a spiritual gratitude, which is a holy and divine affection. They imply no more, than that there is a gratitude which is *merely natural*, and that when persons have affections towards God only, or primarily, for *benefits* received, their affection is only the exercise of natural gratitude. There is doubtless such a thing as a gracious gratitude, which greatly differs from all that gratitude which natural men experience. It differs in the following respects.

1. True gratitude, or thankfulness to God for his kindness to us, arises from a foundation, laid before, of love to God for what he is in *himself;* whereas a natural gratitude has no such antecedent foundation. The gracious stirrings of grateful affection to God, for kindness received, always are from a stock of love already in the heart, established in the first place on other grounds, *viz.* God's own excellency; and hence the affections are disposed to flow out, on occasions of God's kindness. The saint having seen the glory of God, and his heart overcome by it, and captivated into a supreme love to him on that account, his heart hereby becomes tender, and easily affected with kindness received. If a man has no love to another, yet gratitude may be moved by some extraordinary kindness; as in Saul towards David: but this is not the same in kind, as a man's gratitude to a dear friend, for whom his heart had before a high esteem and love. Self-love is not excluded from a gracious gratitude; the saints love God *for his kindness to them*, Psal. cxvi. 1. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication.* But something else is *included;* another love prepares the way, and lays the foundation for these grateful affections.

2. In a gracious gratitude, men are affected with the attribute of God's goodness and free grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their interest, but as a part of the glory and beauty of God's nature. That wonderful and unparalleled grace of God, which is manifested in the work of redemption, and shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ, is infinitely glorious in itself, and appears so to the angels: it is a great part of the moral

perfection and beauty of God's nature. This would be glorious, whether it were exercised towards us or no; and the saint who exercises a gracious thankfulness for it, sees it to be so, and delights in it as such. Yea his concern in it serves the more to engage his mind, and raise his attention and affection. Self-love here assists as an handmaid, being subservient to higher principles, to lead forth the mind to contemplation, and to heighten joy and love. God's kindness to them is a glass set before them, wherein to behold the beautiful attribute of God's goodness: the exercises and displays of this attribute, by this means, are brought near to them, and set right before them. So that in a holy thankfulness to God, the concern our interest has in God's goodness, is not the first foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the heart before, in love to God for his excellency in himself; that makes the heart tender, and susceptive of such impressions from his goodness to us. Nor is our own interest, or the benefits we have received, the only, or the chief objective ground of the present exercises of the affection, but rather God's goodness, as part of the beauty of his nature. The *manifestations* of that lovely attribute, however, set immediately before our eyes, in the exercises of it for us, are a special *occasion* of the mind's attention to that beauty, at that time; and this may serve to heighten the affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object against the whole that has been said, that text, (1 John iv. 19.) *We love him because he first loved us;* as though this implied that God's love to the true saints were the *first foundation* of their love to him. In answer to this I would observe, that the apostle's drift in these words, is to magnify the love of God to us from hence, that he loved us, while we had no love to him; as will be manifest to any one who compares this verse and the two following, with the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses. And that God loved us, when we had no love to him, the apostle proves by this argument, that God's love to the elect, is the ground of their love to him. And it is so three ways: 1. The saints' love to God is the *fruit* of God's love to them, as it is the *gift* of that love. God gave them a spirit of love to him, because he loved them from eternity; his love to his elect is the foundation of their regeneration, and the whole of their redemption. 2. The exercises and discoveries God has made of his wonderful love to sinful men by Jesus Christ, in the work of redemption, are among the chief *manifestations* of his glorious moral perfections to both angels and men; and so is one main objective ground of the love of both to God, in a good consistence with what was said before. 3. God's love to a particular elect person, discovered by his conversion, is a great manifestation of God's moral perfection and glory to him; and thus

is a proper *occasion* of exciting holy gratitude, agreeable to what was before said. And that the saints, in these respects, love God, because he first loved them, fully answers the design of the apostle's argument in that place. So that no good argument can be drawn from hence, against a spiritual and gracious love in the saints, arising *primarily* from the excellency of divine things as they are in themselves, and not from any conceived relation they bear to their interest.

And as it is with the *love* of the saints, so it is with their *joy*, and spiritual *delight:* the first foundation of it is not any consideration of their interest in divine things; but it primarily consists in the sweet entertainment their minds have in the contemplation of the divine and holy beauty of these things, as they are in themselves. And this is indeed the very main difference between the joy of the hypocrite, and the joy of the true saint. The former rejoices in *himself;* self is the first foundation of his joy: the latter rejoices in *God.* The hypocrite has his mind pleased and delighted, in the first place, with his own privilege, and happiness to which he supposes he has attained, or shall attain. True saints have their minds, in the first place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet ideas of the glorious and amiable *nature* of the things of God. This is the spring of all their delights, and the cream of all their pleasures; it is the joy of their joy. This sweet and ravishing entertainment they have in viewing the beautiful and delightful *nature* of divine things, is the *foundation* of the joy they have afterward in the consideration of their being *theirs.* But the dependence of the affections of hypocrites is in a *contrary order:* they first rejoice and are elevated, that they are the favourites of God; and then, *on that ground,* he seems in a sort lovely to them.

The first foundation of the delight a true saint has in God, is his own perfection; and the first foundation of the delight he has in Christ, is his own beauty; he appears in himself the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The way of salvation by Christ is a delightful way to him, for the sweet and admirable manifestations of the divine perfections in it. The holy doctrines of the gospel, by which God is exalted and man abased, holiness honoured and promoted, sin greatly disgraced and discouraged, and free, sovereign love manifested, are *glorious* doctrines in his eyes, and sweet to his taste, *prior* to any conception of his *interest* in these things. Indeed the saints rejoice in their interest in God, and that Christ is theirs; and so they have great reason: but this is not the first spring of their joy. They first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs. They *first* have their hearts filled with sweetness, from the view of

Christ's excellency, the excellency of his grace, and the beauty of salvation by him; and then, they have a *secondary* joy, in that so excellent a Saviour and such excellent grace is *theirs**. But that which is the true *saint's superstructure* is the *hypocrite's foundation*. When they hear of the wonderful things of the gospel, of God's great love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying love to sinners, the great things Christ has purchased and promised to the saints, and hear these things eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of pleasure, and be lifted up with what they hear. But if their joy be examined, it will be found to have no other foundation than this, that they look upon these things as *theirs*, all this exalts *them*, they love to hear of the great love of Christ vastly distinguishing some from others; for self-love makes them affect great distinction from others. No wonder, in this confident opinion of their own good estate, that they feel well under such doctrine, and are pleased in the highest degree, in hearing how much God and Christ makes of them. So that their joy is really a joy *in themselves*, and not *in God*.

And hence it comes to pass, that in their rejoicings and elevations, hypocrites are wont to keep their eye upon themselves; having received what they call spiritual discoveries, their minds are taken up about their own experiences; and not the glory of God, or the beauty of Christ. They keep thinking with themselves, what a good experience is this! what a great discovery is this! what wonderful things have I met with! and so they put their experiences in the place of Christ, his beauty and fulness. Instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable experiences. Instead of feeding and feasting their souls in viewing the innate, sweet, refreshing amiableness of the things exhibited in the gospel, they view them only as it were, side-ways. The object that fixes their contemplation, is their experience; and they are ever feeding their souls, and feasting a selfish principle,

* Dr. Owen *on the Sprit*, p. 199, speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "The effects of this work on the mind, which is the first subject affected with it, proceeds not so far as to give it delight, complacency, and satisfaction, in the lovely spiritual nature and excellencies of the things revealed unto it. The true nature of saving illumination consists in this, that it gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight and prospect into spiritual things, as that in their own spiritual nature they suit, please, and satisfy it; so that it is transformed into them, cast into the mould of them, and rests in them; Rom. vi. 17. chap. xii. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. 2 Cor. iii. 18. chap. iv. 6. This, the work we have insisted on, reacheth not unto. For notwithstanding any discovery that is made therein of spiritual things unto the mind, it finds not an immediate, direct, spiritual excellency in them; but only with respect unto some benefit or advantage, which is to be attained by means thereof. It will not give such a spiritual insight into the mystery of God's grace by Jesus Christ, called his glory shining in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. as that the soul, in its first direct view of it, should, for what it is in itself, admire it, delight in it, approve it, and find spiritual solace, with refreshment, in it. But such a light, such a knowledge, it communicates, as that a man may like it well in its *effects*, as a way of mercy and salvation.

with a view of their discoveries. They take more comfort in their *discoveries* than in *Christ* discovered. This is the true notion of *living upon experiences and frames;* and not our using them as an *evidence* of our good estate. It is very observable, that some who reject *evidences* are most notorious for living upon *experience*, according to the true notion of it.

The affections of hypocrites are very often after this manner; they are first much affected with some impression on their imagination, or some impulse, which they take to be an immediate suggestion, or testimony from God, of his love and their happiness. They fancy a high privilege in some respect, either with or without a text of scripture; they are mightily taken with this, as a great discovery: and hence arise high affections. When their affections are raised, they view those high affections, and call them great and wonderful experiences; and they have a notion that God is greatly pleased with those affections. This affects them still more; and so they are affected with their affections. Thus their affections rise higher and higher, until they sometimes are perfectly swallowed up; also self-conceit, and a fierce zeal rises; and all is built, like a castle in the air, on nothing but imagination, self-love and pride.

And as are the thoughts of such persons, so is their talk; for out of the abundance of their heart their mouth speaketh. As in their high affections they keep their eye upon the beauty of their experiences, and greatness of their attainments; so they are great talkers about themselves. The true saint, when under great spiritual affections, from the fulness of his heart is ready to speak much of God, his glorious perfections and works, the beauty and amiableness of Christ, and the glorious things of the gospel; but hypocrites, in their high affections, talk more of the *discovery*, than of the thing discovered. They are full of talk about the wonderful discoveries they have had, how sure they are of the love of God to them, how safe their condition is, how they know they shall go to heaven, &c.

A true saint, when in the enjoyment of true discoveries of the sweet glory of God and Christ, has his mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that time to view himself, and his own attainments. It would be a loss which he could not bear, to have his eye taken off from the ravishing object of his contemplation, in order to survey his own experience, and to spend time in thinking with himself, what an high attainment this is, and what a good story I now have to tell others! Nor does the pleasure and sweetness of his mind at that time, chiefly arise from the consideration of the safety of his state, or any thing he has in view of his own qualifications, experiences, or circumstances; but from the divine and supreme beauty of

what is the object of his direct view, without himself; which sweetly entertains, and strongly holds his mind.

As the love and joy of hypocrites, are all from the source of self-love; so it is with their other affections, their sorrow for sin, their humiliation and submission, their religious desires and zeal. Every thing is as it were paid for before-hand, in God's highly gratifying their self-love, by making so much of them, and exalting them so highly, as things are in their imagination. It is easy for nature, corrupt as it is, under a notion of being already some of the highest favourites of heaven, and having a God who so protects and favours them in their sins, to love this imaginary God that suits them so well; and equally easy to extol him, submit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high affections of many are all built on the supposition of their being eminent saints. If that opinion which they have of themselves were taken away, if they thought they were some of the lower form of saints, (though they should yet suppose themselves to be real saints) their high affections would fall to the ground. If they only saw a little of the sinfulness and vileness of their own hearts, and their deformity in the midst of their best duties and their best affections, it would destroy their affections; because they are built upon *self*, self-knowledge would destroy them. But as to truly gracious affections, they have their foundation in God and Jesus Christ; and therefore a discovery of themselves, of their own deformity, and the meanness of their experiences, though it will purify their affections, yet it will not destroy them, but in some respects sweeten and heighten them.

SECT. III.

Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the moral excellency of divine things. Or, a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the spring of all holy affections.

Here, for the sake of the more illiterate reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral excellency of divine things. The word *moral* is not to be understood here, according to the common acceptation, when men speak of *morality*, and a *moral* behaviour; meaning an outward conformity to the duties of the moral law, and especially the duties of the second table. Nor is it taken for mere seeming virtues, proceeding from natural principles, in opposition to those that are more inward, spiritual, and divine. The honesty, justice, generosity, good-nature, and public spirit of many of the heathen, are called *moral* virtues, in

distinction from the holy faith, love, humility, and heavenly mindedness of true Christians; but the word *moral* is to be understood so in this place.

In order to a right understanding of what is meant, it must be observed, that divines generally make a distinction between *moral* good and evil, and *natural* good and evil. By *moral* evil, they mean the evil of sin, or that evil which is against *duty*, and contrary to what is right and *ought* to be. By *natural* evil, they do not mean that evil which is properly opposed to duty, but that which is contrary to mere nature, without any respect to a rule of duty. So the evil of *suffering* is called *natural* evil, such as pain and torment, disgrace, and the like: these things are contrary to mere nature, hateful to wicked men and devils, as well as good men and angels. If a child be monstrous, or a natural fool, these are *natural*, but not *moral* evils, because they have not properly the nature of the evil of *sin*. On the other hand, as by *moral evil* divines mean sin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by *moral good*, they mean that which is contrary to sin; or, in other words, that good in beings who have will and choice, whereby, as voluntary agents, they are, and act, as it *becomes* them to be and to act. And, it is obvious, that is *becoming*, which is most *fit*, *suitable*, and *lovely*. By *natural* good, they mean that good which is entirely of a different kind from holiness or virtue, *viz.* that which perfects or suits nature, considering nature abstractly from any holy or unholy qualifications, and without any relation to any rule or measure of right and wrong.

Thus *pleasure* is a natural good; so is *honour;* so is strength; and so is speculative knowledge, human learning, and policy. Thus there is a distinction to be made between men's natural and their moral good; and also between the natural and moral good of the angels in heaven. The great capacity of angelic understandings, their great strength, and the honourable circumstances they are in as the great ministers of God's kingdom, whence they are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, is their *natural* good. But their perfect holiness and glorious goodness, their pure and flaming love to God, to the saints and one another, is their *moral* good. So divines make a distinction between the natural and moral perfections of God: by the *moral* perfections of God, they mean those attributes which God exercises as a moral agent, or whereby the heart and will of God are good, right, infinitely becoming, and lovely; such as his righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and goodness; or, in one word, his holiness. By God's *natural* perfections, they mean those attributes wherein his *greatness* consists; such as his power, his knowledge, his being from everlasting to everlasting, his omni-presence, his awful and terrible majesty.

The moral excellency of an intelligent voluntary being, is more immediately seated in the *heart* or *will*. That intelligent being whose will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent.—This moral excellency, when it is true and real, is *holiness*. Therefore *holiness* comprehends all the true moral excellency of intelligent beings: there is no other *true virtue*, but *real holiness*. Holiness comprehends all the true virtue of a good man; his love to God, his gracious love to men, his justice, his charity, his bowels of mercies, his gracious meekness and gentleness, and all other Christian virtues, belong to his holiness. So the holiness of God, in the more extensive sense of the word—the sense in which the word is commonly, if not universally used concerning God in scripture—is the same with the moral excellency of the divine nature; comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness. As in holy men, their Christian kindness and mercy belong to their holiness; so the kindness and mercy of God, belong to his holiness. Holiness in man, is but the *image* of God's holiness; and surely there are not more virtues belonging to the image, than are in the original. Has derived holiness more in it, than is in that underived holiness, which is its fountain?

As there are two kinds of attributes in God, according to our way of conceiving of him, his moral attributes, which are summed up in his *holiness*, and his natural attributes—strength, knowledge, &c.—that constitute his *greatness;* so there is a two-fold image of God in man, his *moral* or *spiritual* image, which is his holiness, that is the image of God's moral excellency; (which image was lost by the fall;) and God's *natural* image, consisting in man's reason and understanding, his natural ability, and dominion over the creatures, which is the image of God's natural attributes. From what has been said, it may easily be understood what I intend, when I say that love to divine things for the beauty of their *moral excellency*, is the spring of all holy affections.

It has been already shown, under the former head, that the first objective ground of all holy affections is the supreme excellency of divine things as they are in their own nature; I now proceed further, and say more particularly, that the *kind* of excellency which is the first objective ground of all holy affections, is their *holiness*. *Holy persons*, in the exercise of *holy affections*, love divine things primarily for their *holiness;* they love God, in the first place, for the beauty of his *holiness*, or *moral* perfection, as being supremely amiable *in itself*. Not that the saints, in the exercise of gracious affections, love God *only* for his holiness; all his attributes are amiable and glorious in their eyes; they delight in every divine perfection; the contemplation of the infinite great-

ness, power, knowl dge, and terrible majesty of God, is pleasant to them. But their love to God for his holiness is what is most *fundamental* and *essential* in their love. Here it is that true love to God *begins;* all other holy love to divine things flows from hence. Love to God for the beauty of his *moral* attributes, necessarily causes a delight in God for *all* his attributes; for his moral attributes cannot be without his natural attributes. Infinite holiness supposes infinite wisdom, and infinite greatness; and all the attributes of God as it were imply one another.

The true beauty and loveliness of all intelligent beings primarily and most essentially consist in their moral excellency or holiness. Herein consists the loveliness of angels, without which, notwithstanding all their natural perfections, they would have no more loveliness than devils. It is moral excellency alone, that is in itself, and on its own account, the excellency of intelligent beings: it is this that gives beauty to, or rather is the beauty of their natural perfections and qualifications. Moral excellency, if I may so speak, is the excellency of natural excellencies. Natural qualifications are either excellent or otherwise, according as they are joined with moral excellency or not. Strength and knowledge do not render any being lovely without holiness, but more hateful; though they render them more lovely, when joined with holiness. Thus the elect angels are the more glorious for their strength and knowledge, because these natural perfections of theirs are sanctified by their moral perfection. But though the devils are very strong, and of great natural understanding, yet they are not the more lovely. They are more *terrible*, indeed, not more *amiable:* but on the contrary, the more hateful. The holiness of an intelligent creature, is the *beauty* of all his natural perfections. And so it is in God, according to our way of conceiving of the divine Being; holiness is in a peculiar manner the beauty of the divine nature. Hence we often read of the *beauty of holiness*, (Psal. xxix. 2. Psal. xcvi. 9. and cx. 3.) This renders all his other attributes glorious and lovely. It is the glory of God's wisdom, that it is a *holy* wisdom, and not a wicked subtilty. This makes his majesty lovely, and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a *holy* majesty. It is the glory of God's immutability, that it is a *holy* immutability, and not an inflexible obstinacy in wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a sight of God's loveliness must begin here. A true love to God must begin with a delight in his holiness, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our way of conceiving God) it derives its loveliness from this. Therefore, it is impossible that other attributes should appear lovely, in their true loveliness, until this is seen: and it is impossible that any perfection of the

divine nature should be loved with true love until this is loved. If the true *loveliness* of all God's perfections, arises from the loveliness of his holiness, then the true love of all his perfections arises from the love of his holiness. They that do not see the glory of God's holiness, cannot see any thing of the true glory of his mercy and grace. They see nothing of the glory of those attributes, as any excellency of God's nature, as it is in itself; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their interest. For these attributes are no part of the excellency of God's nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwise than as they are included in his holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a part of his moral perfection.

As the beauty of the divine nature primarily consists in God's holiness, so does the beauty of all divine things. Herein consists the beauty of the saints, that they are *saints*, or holy ones: it is the moral image of God in them, which is their beauty; and that is their holiness. Herein consists the beauty and brightness of the angels of heaven, that they are *holy* angels, and so not devils; (Dan. iv. 13, 17, 23. Math. xxv. 31. Mark viii. 38. Acts x. 22. Rev. xiv. 10.) Herein consists the beauty of the Christian religion, above all other religions, that it is so *holy* a religion. Herein consists the excellency of the word of God, that it is so *holy;* Psal. cxix. 140. *Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it*, ver. 128. *I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way*, verse 138. *Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded, are righteous, and very faithful.* And 172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness.* And Psal. xix. 7—10. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.* Herein primarily consists the amiableness and beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely; even in that he is *the holy One of God*, Acts iii. 14. and *God's holy child*, Acts iv. 27. and *he that is holy, he that is true*, Rev. iii. 7. All the spiritual beauty of his human nature, his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenliness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, compassion to the miserable, &c. all is summed up in his *holiness*. And the beauty of his divine nature, of which the beauty of his human nature is the image and reflection, also primarily consists in his holiness. Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a *holy* gospel, and so bright an

emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jesus Christ. Herein consists the spiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are *holy* doctrines, or doctrines *according to godliness.* Herein consists the spiritual beauty of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that it is so *holy* a way. And herein chiefly consists the glory of heaven, that it is the *holy city*, the *holy Jerusalem*, *the habitation of God's holiness*, and so *of his glory*, Is. lxiii. 15. All the beauties of the new Jerusalem, as it is described in the two last chapters of Revelation, are but various representations of this. (See chap. xxi. 2, 10, 11, 18, 21, 27. chap. xxii. 1. 3.)

And therefore it is primarily on account of this kind of excellency, that the saints love all these things. Thus they love the word of God, *because it is very pure.* It is on this account they love the saints; and on this account chiefly it is, that heaven is lovely to them, and those holy tabernacles of God amiable in their eyes. It is on this account that they love God; and on this account primarily it is, that they love Christ, and that their hearts delight in the doctrines of the gospel, and sweetly acquiesce in the way of salvation therein revealed*.

Under the head of the first distinguishing characteristic of gracious affection, I observed, that there is given to the regenerated a new supernatural sense, a certain divine spiritual taste. This is in its whole nature diverse from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other five senses, and something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it. Now the beauty of holiness, is that which is perceived by this spiritual sense, so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them: or this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy seal of Jesus Christ, John iv. 32, 34. *I have meat to eat, that ye know not of.*

* "To the right closing with Christ's person, this is also required, to taste the bitterness of sin, as the greatest evil: else a man will never close with Christ, for his holiness in him, and from him, as the greatest good. For we told you, that that is the right closing with Christ for himself, when it is for his holiness. For ask a whorish heart, what beauty he sees in the person of Christ: he will after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteousness, all his works, see a beauty in them, because they do serve his turn, to comfort him only. Ask a virgin, he will see his happiness in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable in his holiness, which is in him to make him holy too. As in marriage, it is the personal beauty draws the heart. And hence I have thought it reason, that he that loves the brethren for a little grace, will love Christ much more." SHEPARD's *Parable*, Part I. p. 84.

——*My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* I know of no part of the holy scriptures, where the nature and evidences of true and sincere godliness, are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as in the 119th Psalm. The psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end. The excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. *God's law*, that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the great object of the love, the complacence and rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments *above gold, yea, the finest gold*, and to which they are *sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb*; and that upon account of their holiness, as I observed before. The same psalmist declares, that this is the sweetness that a spiritual taste relishes in God's law, Psal. xix. 7—10. *The law of the Lord is perfect:——the commandment of the Lord is pure; the fear of the Lord is clean; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:——the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.*

A holy love has a holy object: the holiness of love consists especially in this, that it is the love of that which is *holy*, for its holiness; so that the holiness of the object, is the quality whereon it fixes and terminates. A holy nature must needs love that chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that which above all others is agreeable to a holy nature, is holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any nature than itself. And so the holy nature of God and Christ, the word of God, and other divine things, must be above all agreeable to the holy nature of the saints.

Again, a holy nature doubtless loves holy things *especially* on account of that for which sinful nature has enmity against them: but that for which chiefly sinful nature is at enmity against holy things, is their *holiness;* it is for this, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, against the law, and the people of God. Now, it is just arguing from *contraries;* from contrary causes, to contrary effects; from opposite natures, to opposite tendencies. We know that holiness is of a directly contrary nature to wickedness; as therefore it is the nature of wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate holiness; so it must be the nature of holiness chiefly to tend to, and delight in holiness.

The holy nature of saints and angels in heaven (where the true tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the holiness of divine things. This is the divine beauty which chiefly engages the attention, admiration, and constant praise of the

bright and burning Seraphim; Is. vi. 3. *One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* Rev. iv. 8. *They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* So the glorified saints, chap. xv. 4. *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.*

And the scriptures represent the saints on earth as adoring God *primarily* on this account; they admire and extol all God's attributes, either as deriving loveliness from his holiness, or as being a part of it. Thus when they praise God for his power, his *holiness* is the beauty that engages them; Psal. xcviii. 1. *O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his* HOLY *arm hath gotten him the victory.* So when they praise him for his justice and terrible majesty; Psal. xcix. 2, 3. *The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name, for it is* HOLY. Verse 5. *Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool: for he is* HOLY. Verse 8, 9. *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill: for the Lord our God is* HOLY. So when they praise God for his mercy and faithfulness; Psal. xcvii. 11, 12. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous: and give thanks at the remembrance of his* HOLINESS. 1 Sam. ii. 2. *There is none* HOLY *as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*

By this therefore all may try their affections, and particularly their love and joy. Various creatures shew the difference of their natures, very much, in the things they relish as their proper good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a difference is there between true saints, and natural men: natural men have no sense of the goodness and excellency of holy things, at least *for* their holiness. They have no taste for that kind of good, and so may be said not to know it; it is wholly hid from them. But the saints, by the mighty power of God, have it discovered to them; they have that supernatural sense given them, by which they perceive it. It is this that captivates their hearts, and delights them above all things; it is the most amiable and sweet thing, to the heart of a true saint, in heaven or earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his soul; and that wherein, above all things, he places his happiness, both in this world, and in another. By this you may examine your love to God, to Jesus Christ, to the word of God, and to his people. By this you may examine your desires after heaven; whether they be from a supreme delight in this sort of beauty, without being

primarily moved by your imagined interest in them, or expectations from them. There are many high affections, great seeming love and rapturous joys, which have nothing of this holy relish belonging to them.

Particularly, you may try your discoveries of the glory of God's grace and love, and your affections arising from them. The grace of God may appear lovely two ways; either as *bonum utile*, a *profitable good* to me, what greatly serves my interest, and so suits my self-love; or as a *bonum formosum*, a *beautiful good* in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature. In this latter respect it is that true saints have their hearts affected, and love captivated by the free grace of God.

Thus it appears, that though persons may have a great sense of the *natural* perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other sight or sense of God than that which consists in the beauty of his *moral* perfections, it is no certain sign of grace. What though men have a great sense of the *awful greatness, and terrible majesty of God*; this is only his *natural* perfection, which men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the beauty of his moral perfection, and have nothing of that spiritual taste which relishes this divine sweetness.

It has been shown already, in what was said upon the first distinguishing mark of gracious affections, that what is spiritual, is entirely different in its nature, from all that it is possible for any graceless person to have, while he continues graceless. But it is possible that those who are wholly without grace, should have a clear sight, and very great and affecting sense of God's greatness, his mighty power, and awful majesty; for this is what the devils have, though they have lost the *spiritual* knowledge of God, consisting in a sense of the amiableness of his moral perfections. They are perfectly destitute of any relish of that kind of beauty, yet they have a very great knowledge of the natural glory of God, his awful greatness and majesty; this they behold, and therefore tremble before him. This glory of God all shall behold at the day of judgment; God will make all rational beings to behold it, angels and devils, saints and sinners. Christ will manifest his infinite greatness and awful majesty to every one, in a light that none can resist, when *he shall come in the glory of his Father, and every eye shall see him.* Then they shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the face of him that sits upon the throne. God will make all his enemies to behold this, and to live in a most clear and affecting view of it, to all eternity. God hath often declared his immutable purpose to make all his enemies to know him in this respect, in so often annexing these words to the threatenings he denounces against

them, *And they shall know that I am the Lord;* yea, he hath sworn that all men shall see his glory in this respect, Numb. xiv. 21. *As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.* And this kind of manifestation of God is very often spoken of in scripture, as made, or to be made, in the sight of God's enemies in this world*. This was a manifestation which God made of himself in the sight of that wicked congregation at Mount Sinai; deeply affecting them with it; so that all the people in the camp trembled. Wicked men and devils will see, and have a great sense of every thing that appertains to the glory of God, except the beauty of his moral perfection. They will see his infinite greatness, majesty, and power, and will be fully convinced of his omniscience, eternity and immutability; and even will see every thing appertaining to his moral attributes themselves, except their beauty and amiableness. They will see and know that he is perfectly just, righteous, and true; and that he is a holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil, who cannot look on iniquity; and they will see the wonderful manifestations of his infinite goodness and free grace to the saints. Nothing will be hid from their eyes, but the *beauty* of these moral attributes, and that beauty of the other attributes, which arises from it. And so natural men while in this world are capable of having a very affecting sense of every thing that appertains to God, but this only. Nebuchandnezzar had a great and very affecting sense of the infinite greatness and awful majesty of God; of his supreme and absolute dominion, his irresistible power, and high sovereignty. He saw that he, and all the inhabitants of the earth, were as nothing before him, had a great conviction in his conscience of his justice, and an affecting sense of his great goodness, Dan. iv. 1—3, 34, 35, 37. And the sense that Darius had of God's perfections, seems to be very much like his, Dan. vi. 25, &c. But saints and angels behold the *beauty of God's holiness:* and this sight only, will melt and humble the hearts of men, wean them from the world, draw them to God, and effectually change them. A sight of the awful greatness of God may overpower men's *strength*, and be more than they can endure; but if the *moral* beauty of God be hid, the enmity of the *heart* will remain in its full strength. No love will be kindled, the will, instead of being effectually gained, will remain inflexible; whereas the first glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God shining into the heart, produces all these effects with a power which nothing can withstand.

The sense that natural men may have of the awful greatness of God, may affect them various ways; it may not only terrify, but

*See Exod. ix. 16, and chap. xiv. 18. and xv. 16. Psal. lxvi. 3. and xlvi. 10. and other places innumerable.

elevate them, and raise their joy and praise. This will be the natural effect of it, under the real or supposed receipt of some extraordinary mercy from God, by the influence of mere principles of nature. It has been shewn already, that the receipt of kindness may, by the influence of natural principles, affect the heart with gratitude and praise to God; but if a person, at the same time, has a sense of his infinite greatness, and that he is as nothing in comparison of him, surely this will naturally raise his gratitude and praise the higher, for kindness to one so much inferior. A sense of God's greatness had this effect upon Nebuchadnezzar, on that extraordinary favour of his restoration, after he had been driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts. A sense of God's exceeding greatness raises his gratitude very high; so that he does, in the most lofty terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the world to do it with him. If a natural man, at the same time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite greatness and majesty, entertains a strong conceit that this great God has made him his child and special favourite, and promised him eternal glory in his highest love, will not this have a tendency, according to the course of nature, to raise his joy and praise to a great height?

Therefore, it is beyond doubt, that too much weight has been laid on discoveries of God's greatness, awful majesty, and natural perfection, operating after this manner, without any real view of the holy, lovely majesty of God. And experience does abundantly confirm, what reason and scripture declare as to this matter; there having been very many persons, who have seemed to be overpowered with the greatness and awful majesty of God, but have been very far from a Christian spirit and temper, in any proportion, or fruits in practice in any wise agreeable; nay, their discoveries have worked in a way *contrary* to the operation of truly spiritual discoveries.

Not that a sense of God's greatness and natural attributes is not useful and necessary. For, as I observed before, this is implied in a manifestation of the beauty of God's holiness. Though that be something beyond it, it *supposes* it, as the greater supposes the less. And though natural men may have a sense of the natural perfections of God, yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the saints, than with them. Grace enables men to see these things in a better manner, than natural men do; and not only enables them to see God's natural attributes, but that *beauty* of those attributes which (according to our way of conceiving of God) is derived from his holiness.

SECT. IV.

Gracious affections arise from the mind being enlightened rightly and spiritually to apprehend divine things.

Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before, more of God or Christ, and of the glorious things exhibited in the gospel. He has a clearer and better view than he had before, when he was not affected; either he receives some new understanding of divine things, or has his former knowledge renewed after the view was decayed; 1 John iv. 7. *Every one that loveth, knoweth God.* Phil. i. 9. *I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.* Rom. xii. *They have a seal of God, but not according to knowledge.* Col. iii. 10. *The new man, which is renewed in knowledge.* Psal. xliii. 3, 4. *O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill.* John vi. 45. *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart, enlarges the affections, and opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven; Luke xi. 52. *Ye have taken away the key of knowledge.*

Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding, which is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high*. Indeed

* "Many that have had mighty strong affections at first conversion, afterwards become dry, and wither, and consume, and pine, and die away: and now their hypocrisy is manifest, if not to all the world by open profaneness, yet to the discerning eye of living Christians, by a formal, barren, unsavoury, unfruitful heart and course; because they never had light to conviction enough as yet.—It is strange to see some people carried with mighty affection against sin and hell, and after Christ. And what is the hell you fear?—A dreadful place. What is Christ?—They scarce know so much as devils do; but that is all. Oh! trust them not. Many *have*, and these *will* fall away to some lust, or opinion, or pride, or world; and the reason is, they never had light enough, John v. 35. 'John was a burning and shining light, and they did joy in him for a season;' yet glorious as it was, they saw not Christ by it, especially not with divine light. It is rare to see Christians full both of light and affection. And therefore, consider of this, many a man has been well brought up, and is of a sweet loving nature, mild and gentle, and harmless, likes and loves the best things, and his meaning, and mind, and heart is good, and has more in heart than in shew; and so hopes all shall go well with him. I say, there may lie greatest hypocrisy under greatest affections; especially if they want light. You shall be hardened in your hypocrisy by them I never liked violent affections and pangs, but only such as were dropped in by light; be-

they have some new apprehensions which they had not before. Such is the nature of man, that it is impossible his mind should be affected, unless it be by something that he apprehends, or that his mind conceives. But in many persons those apprehensions or conceptions wherewith they are affected, have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them. For instance; when a person is affected with a lively idea, suddenly excited in his mind, of some shape, or beautiful pleasant form of countenance, a shining light, or other glorious outward appearance: here is something conceived by the mind; but nothing of the nature of instruction. Persons become never the wiser by such things, more knowing about God, a Mediator between God and man, the way of salvation by Christ, or any thing contained in the doctrines of the gospel. Persons by these external ideas have no further acquaintance with God, as to any of the attributes or perfections of his nature; nor have they any further understanding of his word, his ways, or works. Truly spiritual and gracious affections are not raised after this manner; these arise from the enlightening of the understanding, to understand the things taught of God and Christ, in a new manner. There is a new understanding of the excellent nature of God and his wonderful perfections, some new view of Christ in his spiritual excellencies and fulness; or things are opened to him in a new manner, whereby he now understands those divine and spiritual doctrines which once were foolishness to him. Such enlightenings of the understanding as these, are entirely different in their nature, from strong ideas of shapes and colours, outward brightness and glory, or sounds and voices. That all gracious affections arise from some instruction, or enlightening of the understanding, is therefore a further proof, that affections which arise from such an impression on the imagination, are not gracious.

Hence also it appears, that affections arising from texts of scripture coming to the mind, are vain, when no *instruction* received in the understanding from those texts, or any thing taught in them, is the ground of the affection, but the *manner* of their coming to the mind. When Christ makes the scripture a means of the heart's burning with gracious affection, it is *by opening the scriptures to their understandings;* Luke xxiv. 32. *Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* It appears also that the affection which is occasioned by the coming of a text of scripture must be vain, when the affection is founded on something supposed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it, nor in

cause those come from an external principle, and last not, but these do.—Men are not affrighted by the light of the sun, though clearer than lightning."—(Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 146.)

any other scripture; because such supposed instruction is not real instruction, but a misapprehension of the mind. For instance, when persons suppose that they are expressly taught by some scripture coming to their minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, that their sins are forgiven, that God is their father, and the like; this is a misapprehension; for the scripture no where reveals the individual persons who are beloved, expressly, but only by revealing the qualifications of persons beloved of God.———Therefore this matter is not to be learned from scripture any other way than by consequence, from these qualifications; for things are not to be *learned from* the scripture any other way than they are *taught in* the scripture.

Affections really arise from ignorance, rather than instruction, in the instances which have been mentioned; as likewise in some others that might be mentioned. Some, when they find themselves free of speech in prayer, call it God's being with them; this affects them, and their affections are increased; when they look not into the cause of this freedom of speech, which may arise many other ways besides God's spiritual presence. So some are much affected with apt thoughts that come into their minds about the scripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. They ascribe many of the workings of their own minds, of which they have a high opinion, to the special, immediate influences of God's Spirit; and so are mightily affected with their privilege.—And there are some instances of persons, in whom it seems manifest, that the first ground of their affection is some bodily sensation. The animal spirits, by some cause, (and probably sometimes by the devil,) are suddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable motion, causing persons to feel pleasantly in their bodies; the spirits being put into such a motion as is wont to be connected with the exhilaration of the mind; and the soul, by the laws of its union with the body, hence feels pleasure. This motion of the animal spirits does not first arise from any apprehension of the mind whatsoever; but the very first thing felt, is an exhilaration and a pleasant external sensation, it may be in their breasts. Hence, through ignorance, the person being surprised, begins to think, surely this is the Holy Ghost coming into him. And then the mind begins to be affected and raised; there is first great joy, and then many other affections, in a very tumultuous manner, putting all nature, both body and mind, into a mighty ruffle. For, though, as I observed before, it is the soul only that is *the seat of the affections*, yet this hinders not but that bodily sensations may, in this manner, be *an occasion of affections* in the mind.

And though men's religious affections truly arise from some instruction, or light in the understanding, yet the affection is not

gracious, unless the *light* which is the ground of it be *spiritual*. Affections may be excited by what they obtain merely by human teaching, with the common improvement of their faculties. Men may be much affected by knowledge of religious things obtained this way; as some philosophers have been mightily affected, and almost carried beyond themselves, by the discoveries they have made in mathematics and natural philosophy. So men may be much affected from common illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which he assists their faculties to a greater degree of that kind of understanding of religious matters, which they have by the ordinary exercise and improvement of their own faculties. Such illuminations may much affect the mind; as in many whom we read of in scripture, *that were once enlightened:* but these affections are not spiritual.

There is, if the scriptures are of any use to teach us any thing, a spiritual, supernatural understanding of divine things, *peculiar* to the saints. 1 Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* It is certainly a kind of seeing spiritual things peculiar to the saints, which is spoken of in 1 John iii. 6. *Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.* 3 John 11. *He that doeth evil, hath not seen God.* And John vi. 40. *This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.* Chap. xiv. 19. *The world seeth me no more; but ye see me.* Chap. xvii. 3. *This is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Matth. xi. 27. *No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* John xii. 45. *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.* Psal. ix. 10. *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.* Phil. iii. 8. *I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:*——ver. 10. *That I may know him.*——Innumerable other places there are, all over the Bible, which shew the same. And that there is an understanding of divine things, which in its nature and kind is wholly different from all knowledge that natural men have, is evident from this, that there is what the scripture calls spiritual understanding; Col. i. 9. *We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.* It has been already shown, that what is *spiritual*, in the ordinary use of the word in the New Testament, is entirely different in nature and kind, from all which natural men are, or can be the subjects of.

From hence it may be surely inferred, wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of perception, which is in its nature perfectly diverse from all that natural men can have, it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas, or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to say, that it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual sense, which the souls of natural men have not; as is evident by what has been repeatedly observed. But I have already shown what that new spiritual sense is, which the saints have given them in regeneration, and what is the object of it. I have shown that the immediate object of it is the supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the scripture: the apostle very plainly teaches, that the great thing discovered by spiritual light, and understood by spiritual knowledge, is the glory of divine things, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them:* together with ver. 6. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* And chap. iii. 18. preceding, *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* And it must needs be so, for the scripture often teaches, that all true religion summarily consists in the *love* of divine things. And therefore that kind of understanding or knowledge, which is the proper foundation of true religion, must be the knowledge of the *loveliness of divine things.* For doubtless, that knowledge which is the proper foundation of *love*, is the knowledge of *loveliness.* What that beauty or loveliness of divine things is, which is the proper and immediate object of a spiritual sense of mind, was shewed under the last head insisted on, viz. That it is the beauty of their *moral perfection.* Therefore it is in the view or sense of this, that spiritual understanding does more immediately and primarily consist. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing else; for (as has been shown) there is nothing pertaining to divine things, besides the beauty of their moral excellency—and those properties and qualities of divine things of which this beauty is the foundation—but what natural men and devils can see and know, and will know fully and clearly to all eternity.

From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this conclusion, That spiritual understanding consists in a *cordial sense of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral*

perfection of divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, that depends upon, and flows from such a sense.

Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a cordial sense, or *a sense of heart of that spiritual beauty.* I say, a *sense of heart;* for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding; nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this matter. When the mind is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of delight in the presence of its idea: and this carries in the very nature of it, *the sense of the heart;* or an effect and impression of the soul of a substance possessed of taste, inclination and will.

There is a distinction to be made between a mere *notional understanding*, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and *the sense of the heart*, wherein the mind not only *speculates* and beholds, but *relishes* and *feels.* That sort of knowledge by which a man has a sensible perception of amiableness and loathsomeness, or of sweetness and nauseousness, is not the same sort of knowledge with that, by which he knows what a triangle or a square is. The one is mere *speculative* knowledge; the other *sensible* knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned. The *heart* is the proper subject of it, or the soul as a being that not only beholds, but has *inclination*, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the nature of *instruction* in it; as he that has perceived the sweet taste of honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon and felt it.

The apostle seems to make a distinction between mere speculative and spiritual knowledge, in calling the former *the form of knowledge, and of the truth;* Rom. ii. 20. *Which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.* The latter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting; 2 Cor. ii. 14. *Now thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge in every place,* Matth. xvi. 23. *Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men.* 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* Cant. i. 3. *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name* is as ointment poured forth, *therefore do the virgins love thee:* compared with 1 John ii. 20. *But ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things.*

Spiritual understanding *primarily* consists in this *sense, or taste of the moral beauty of divine things;* so that no knowledge can be called spiritual, any further than it arises from, and has this

in it. But *secondarily*, it includes *all that discerning and knowledge of religious things, which depends upon, and flows from such a sense.* When the true beauty and amiableness in divine things, is discovered to the soul, it opens as it were a new world to its view. This shews the glory of all God's perfections, and of every thing appertaining to the divine Being. For, as was observed before, the beauty of all arises from God's moral perfection. This shews the glory of all God's works, both of creation and providence. For it is their special glory, that God's holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness, are so manifested in them; and without these moral perfections, there would be no glory in that power and skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral perfections, is the special end of all the works of God's hands. By this sense of the moral beauty of divine things, is known the sufficiency of Christ as a Mediator: for it is only by the discovery of beauty in the moral perfection of Christ, that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellency of his person, so as to know any thing more of it than the devils do: and it is only by the knowledge of the excellency of Christ's person, any know his sufficiency as a Mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the former. It is by seeing the excellency of Christ's person, that the saints are made sensible of the preciousness of his blood, and its sufficiency to atone for sin: for therein consists the preciousness of Christ's blood, that it is the blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, the sufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. By this sight of moral beauty, is seen the beauty of salvation by Christ: for that consists in the beauty of God's moral perfections, which wonderfully shines forth in every step of this method of salvation. By this is seen the fitness and suitableness of this way; which consists in its tendency to deliver us from sin and hell, and to bring us to happiness. For true happiness consists in the possession and enjoyment of moral good, in a way sweetly agreeing with God's moral perfections. And in the way being so contrived as to attain these ends, consists the excellent wisdom of that way. By this is seen the excellency of the word of God. Take away all the moral beauty and sweetness in the word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless thing. By this is seen the true foundation of our duty, the worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honoured, loved, submitted to, and served, as he requires of us, and the amiableness of the duties themselves required. And by this is seen the true evil of sin; for he who sees the beauty of holiness, must necessarily see the hatefulness of sin, its contrary. By this men understand the true glory of heaven, which consists in the beauty and happiness contained in

holiness. By this is seen the amiableness and happiness of saints and angels. He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world, which is the fulness of all things, without which all the world is empty, yea, worse than nothing. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen that is worth the seeing; for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood worthy the exercise of the noble faculty of understanding. This is the beauty of the Godhead, the divinity of divinity (if I may so speak,) the good of the infinite fountain of good. Without this, God himself (if that were possible) would be an infinite evil, we ourselves had better never have been; and there had better have been no being. He therefore in effect knows nothing, that knows not this; his knowledge is but the shadow of knowledge, or the *form of knowledge*, as the apostle calls it. Well therefore may the scripture represent those who are destitute of that spiritual sense, by which is perceived the beauty of holiness, as totally *blind*, *deaf*, and *senseless*, yea, *dead*. And well may regeneration, in which this divine sense is given to the soul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind eyes, raising the dead, and bringing a person into a new world. For if what has been said be considered, it will be manifest, that when a person has this sense and knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he *knew* all things *after the flesh, yet henceforth he will know them so no more;* and *he is become a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new;* (2 Cor. v. 16, 17.)

Besides, there arises from this sense of spiritual beauty, all true experimental knowledge of religion, which is of itself as it were a new world of knowledge. He that sees not the beauty of holiness, knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is, he is destitute of any conception of gracious exercises of soul, holy comforts and delights, and effects of the saving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart. He is ignorant of the greatest works of God, the most important and glorious effects of his power upon the creature; he is wholly ignorant of the saints as saints, and knows not what they are; and in effect is wholly ignorant of the spiritual world. Thus, it plainly appears, that God implanting a spiritual, supernatural sense, makes a great change in a man. And were it not for the very imperfect degree in which this sense is commonly given at first, or the small degree of this glorious light that first dawns upon the soul; the change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in conversion, would be much greater, and more remarkable every way, than if a man born blind should have the sense of seeing imparted to him at once, in the midst of the clear light of the sun, discovering a world of

visible objects. For though sight be more noble than any of the other external senses, yet this spiritual sense is infinitely more noble, and the object infinitely more important.—This is that knowledge of divine things from whence all truly gracious affections proceed; by which therefore all affections are to be tried. Those affections that arise wholly from any other kind of knowledge, or do result from any other kind of apprehensions, are vain*.

From what has been said may be learned, wherein the most essential difference lies between that light or understanding which is given by the *common influences* of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of natural men, and that *saving instruction* which is given to the saints. The *latter* primarily and most essentially lies in beholding the *holy beauty* of divine things: which is the only *true* moral good, and to which the soul of fallen man is by nature totally blind. The *former* consists only in a further understanding, through the assistance of natural principles, of those things which men may know, in some measure, by the ordinary exercise of their faculties; it is only the knowledge of those things pertaining to religion, which are *natural.* Thus for instance, in awakenings and convictions of conscience in natural men, the Spirit of God gives no knowledge of true *moral* beauty, but only assists the mind to a clearer idea of the guilt of sin, or its relation to punishment, and its connexion with the *evil of suffering*, (without any sight of its true *moral* evil, or odiousness as sin,) and a clearer idea of the *natural* perfections of God, wherein consists, not his holy beauty and glory, but his awful and terrible greatness. It is a clear sight of this, that will fully awaken the consciences of wicked men at the day of judgment, *without any spiritual light.* And it is a lesser degree of the same, that awakens

* "Take heed of contenting yourselves with every kind of knowledge. Do not worship every image of your own heads; especially you that fall short of truth, or the knowledge of it. For when you have some, there may be yet that wanting which may make you sincere. There are many men of great knowledge, able to teach themselves, and others too: and yet their hearts are unsound. How comes this to pass? Is it because they have so much light? No: but because they want much. And therefore content not yourselves with every knowledge. There is some knowledge which men have by the light of nature, (which leaves them without excuse) from the book of creation; some by power of education; some by the light of the law, whereby men know their sin and evils; some by the letter of the gospel; and so men may know much, and speak well; and so in seeing, see not: some by the Spirit, and may see much, so as to prophesy in Christ's name, and yet bid depart, Matth. vii. Now there is *a light of glory*, whereby the elect see things in another manner; to tell you how, they cannot—it is the beginning of light in heaven: and the same Spirit that fills Christ, filling their minds, that they know, by this annointing, all things; which if ever you have, you must become babes and fools in your own eyes. God will never write his law in your minds, until all the scribblings of it are blotted out. Account all your knowledge loss for the gaining of this. It is sad to see many a man pleasing himself in his own dreaming delusions; yet the poor creature in seeing, sees not: which is God's heavy curse upon men under greatest means, and which lays all waste and desolate."—(Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 147.)

the consciences of natural men, *without spiritual light*, in this world. The same discoveries are in some measure given in the conscience of an awakened sinner in this world, which will be given more fully at the day of judgment. The same kind of apprehension, in a lesser degree, makes awakened sinners in this world sensible of the dreadful guilt of sin against so great and terrible a God, and of its amazing punishment—and fills them with fearful apprehensions of divine wrath—that will thoroughly convince all wicked men, of the infinitely dreadful nature and guilt of sin, and astonish them with apprehensions of wrath, when Christ shall come in the glory of his power and majesty, and every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. And in those common illuminations which are sometimes given to natural men, exciting in them some kind of religious desire, love and joy, the mind is only assisted to a clearer apprehension of the *natural good* that is in divine things. Thus sometimes, under common illuminations, men are raised with the ideas of the *natural* good that is in heaven; as its outward glory, its ease, its honour and advancement, being there the objects of the high favour of God, and the great respect of men and angels, &c. So there are many things exhibited in the gospel, concerning God and Christ, and the way of salvation, that have a *natural* good in them, which suits the natural principle of self-love. Thus in that great goodness of God to sinners, and the wonderful dying love of Christ, there is a *natural* good, which all men love, as they love *themselves;* as well as a spiritual and holy beauty, which is seen only by the regenerate. Therefore there are many things appertaining to the word of God's grace delivered in the gospel, which may cause natural men, when they hear it, *anon with joy to receive it.* All that love which natural men have to God and Christ, Christian virtues, and good men, is not from any sight of the amiableness, or true *moral* excellency of these things; but only for the sake of the *natural* good there is in them. All natural men's hatred of sin, is as much from principles of nature, as their hatred of a tiger for his rapaciousness, or their aversion to a serpent for his poison and hurtfulness. Their love of Christian virtue, is from no higher principle than their love of a man's good nature, which appears amiable to natural men; but no otherwise than silver and gold appears amiable in the eyes of a merchant, or than the blackness of the soil is beautiful in the eyes of the farmer.

From what has been said it appears, that spiritual understanding does not consist in any new *doctrinal* knowledge, or in having suggested to the mind any new *proposition*, not before read or heard of: for it is plain, that this suggesting of new propositions, is a thing entirely diverse from giving the mind a new taste

or relish of beauty and sweetness*. It is also evident, that spiritual knowledge does not consist in any new *doctrinal explanation* of any part of the scripture; for still, this is but doctrinal knowledge, or the knowledge of propositions; the doctrinal explaining of any part of scripture, is only giving us to understand, what are the propositions contained or taught in that part of scripture.

Hence it appears, that the *spiritual understanding* of the scripture, does not consist in opening to the mind the *mystical meaning* of the scripture, in its parables, types, and allegories; for this is only a doctrinal explication of the scripture. He that explains what is meant by the stony ground, and the seed springing up suddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what *propositions* or *doctrines* are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by Jacob's ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, or what was typified by Joshua's leading Israel through Jordan, only shews what propositions are hid in these passages. And many men can explain these types, who have no spiritual knowledge. It is possible that a man might know how to interpret *all* the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the Bible, and not have *one beam of spiritual light* in his mind; because he may not have any spiritual sense of the holy beauty of divine things, and may see nothing of this kind of glory in any of these mysteries, or any other part of the scripture. It is plain, by what the apostle says, that a man might understand all such mysteries, and have no saving grace; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* They therefore are very foolish, who are exalted in an opinion of their own spiritual attainments, from their notions of the mystical meaning of scripture passages, as though it was a *spiritual* understanding, immediately given them by the Spirit of God. Their affections may be highly raised; but what has been said, shews the vanity of such affections.

From what has been said, it is also evident, that it is not *spiritual* knowledge, for persons to be informed of their duty, by having it immediately suggested to their minds, that such and such outward actions or deeds are the will of God. If we suppose that it is truly God's manner thus to signify his will to his peo-

* Calvin, in his Institutions, Book I. Chap. ix. § 1, says, "It is not the office of the Spirit that is promised us, to make new and before unheard of revelations, or to coin some new kind of doctrine, which tends to draw us away from the received doctrine of the gospel; but to seal and confirm to us that very doctrine which is by the gospel." And in the same place he speaks of some, that in those days maintained the contrary notion, "pretending to be immediately led by the Spirit, as persons that were governed by a most haughty self conceit; and not so properly to be looked upon as only labouring under a mistake, as driven by a sort of raving madness."

ple, by immediate inward suggestions, such suggestions have nothing of the nature of *spiritual* light. Such knowledge would only be *doctrinal;* for a proposition concerning the *will* of God, is as properly a doctrine of religion, as a proposition concerning the nature or a work of God. Having any proposition declared to a man, either by speech, or inward suggestion, differs vastly from having the holy beauty of divine things manifested to the soul, wherein spiritual knowledge most essentially consists. Thus there was no spiritual light in Balaam; though he had the will of God immediately suggested to him by the Spirit, concerning the way that he should go, and what he should do and say.

It is manifest therefore, that being led and directed in this manner, is not that holy and spiritual *leading of the Spirit of God*, which is peculiar to the saints and a distinguishing mark of the sons of God, spoken of Rom. viii. 14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.* Gal. v. 18. *But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

And if persons have the will of God concerning their actions, suggested to them by some text of scripture suddenly brought to their minds—which text, as the words lay in the Bible, before they came to their minds, related to the action and behaviour of some other person—it alters not the case. The suggestion being accompanied with an apt text of scripture, does not make it to be of the nature of spiritual instruction. For instance, suppose a person in New-England, on some occasion, were at a loss whether it was his duty to go into some popish or heathenish land, where he was like to be exposed to many difficulties and dangers, and should pray to God that he would shew him the way of his duty; and after earnest prayer, should have those words which God spake to Jacob, Gen. xlvi. suddenly and extraordinarily brought to his mind, as if they were spoken to him; *Fear not to go down into Egypt, and I will go with thee; and I will also surely bring thee up again.* In which words, though as they lay in the Bible before they came to his mind, they related only to Jacob and his behaviour; yet he supposes that God has a further meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that by Egypt is to be understood this particular country he has in his mind, and that the action intended is his going thither, and the meaning of the promise is, that God would bring him back into New-England again. There is nothing of the nature of a spiritual or gracious leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the nature of spiritual understanding in it. Spiritually to understand the scripture, is rightly to understand what *is in* the scripture, and what *was in* it before it was understood: it is to understand rightly, what *used to be contained in* the meaning of it, and not the *making* a new meaning. When the mind is enlightened spiri-

tually and rightly to understand the scripture, it is enabled to see that which before was not seen, *by reason of blindness.* But if it was by reason of blindness, that is an evidence that the same meaning was in it *before*, otherwise it would have been no blindness not to see it; it is no blindness not to see a meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the eyes to understand the scripture, is *to open the eyes*, Psal. cxix. 18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;* which argues, that the reason why the same was not seen in the scripture before, was, that the eyes were *shut;* which would not be the case, if the meaning now understood was not there before, but is now newly added to the scripture by the *manner* of the scripture coming to the mind. This making of a *new meaning* to the scripture, is the same thing as making a *new scripture;* it is properly *adding* to the word, which is threatened with so dreadful a curse. Spiritually to *understand* the scripture, is to have the eyes of the mind opened to behold the wonderful, spiritual excellency of the glorious things contained in the true meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever since it was written; to behold the amiable and bright manifestations of the divine perfections, the excellency and sufficiency of Christ, the suitableness of the way of salvation by him, and the spiritual glory of the precepts and promises of the scripture, &c. These things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been seen before, if it had not been for blindness, without having any new sense added.

And as to a gracious *leading of the Spirit*, it consists in two things; partly in *instructing* a person in his duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully *inducing* him to comply with that instruction. But so far as the gracious leading of the Spirit lies in instruction, it consists in a person's being guided by a spiritual and distinguishing taste of that which has in it true moral beauty. I have shewn that spiritual knowledge primarily consists in a taste or relish of the amiableness and beauty of that which is truly good and holy: this holy relish discerns and distinguishes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a train of reasoning. As he who has a true relish of external beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking upon it; he stands in no need of a train of reasoning about the proportion of the features, in order to determine whether that which he sees be a beautiful countenance or no; he needs nothing, but only the glance of his eye. He who has a rectified musical ear, knows whether the sound he hears be true harmony; he does not need first to be at the trouble of the reasonings of a mathematician, about the proportion of the notes. He that has a rectified palate, knows what is good food, as soon as he tastes it, without the rea-

within that guides him; the habit of his mind is attended with a taste, by which he immediately relishes that air and mien which is benevolent, and disrelishes the contrary. It causes him to distinguish between the one and the other *in a moment*, more precisely, than the most accurate reasonings can find out *in many hours*. The nature and inward tendency of a heavy body that is let fall from a height, shews the way to the centre of the earth more exactly in an instant, than the ablest mathematician without it could determine, by his most accurate observations in a whole day. Thus it is that a spiritual disposition and taste teaches and guides a man in his behaviour in the world. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable disposition, will direct a person of mean capacity to such a behaviour, as is agreeable to Christian rules of humility, meekness and charity, far more readily and precisely, than the most diligent study, and elaborate reasonings, of a man of the strongest faculties, who has not a Christian spirit within him. So also will a spirit of love to God, holy fear and reverence towards God, and filial confidence in him, and a heavenly disposition, teach and guide a man in his behaviour.

It is an exceeding difficult thing for a wicked man, destitute of Christian principles in his heart, to guide him, to know how to demean himself like a Christian, with the life, beauty, and heavenly sweetness of a truly holy, humble, Christ-like behaviour. He knows not how to put on these garments; neither do they fit him; Eccl. x. 2, 3. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left. Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool:* with verse 15. *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.* Prov. x. 32. *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable.* Chap. xv. 2. *The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.* And chap. xvi. 23. *The heart of the righteous teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.*

The saints in thus judging of actions by a spiritual taste, have not a particular recourse to the express rules of God's word, with respect to every word and action that is before them: but yet their taste itself in general, is subject to the rule of God's word, and must be tried by that, and a right reasoning upon it. A man of a rectified palate judges of particular morsels by his taste; but yet his palate itself must be judged of, whether it be right or no, by certain rules and reasons. But a spiritual taste mightily helps the soul in its reasonings on the word of God, and in judging of the true meaning of its rules; as it removes the prejudices of a depraved appetite, naturally leads the thoughts in the right channel, casts a light on the word, and causes the true meaning

most naturally to come to mind, through the harmony there is between the disposition and relish of a sanctified soul, and the true meaning of the rules of God's word. Yea, this harmony tends to bring the texts themselves to mind on proper occasions; as the particular state of the stomach and palate, tends to bring such particular meats and drinks to mind, as are agreeable to that state. Thus *the children of God are led by the Spirit of God* in judging of actions themselves, and in their meditations upon the rules of God's holy word: and so God *teaches them his statutes, and causes them to understand the way of his precepts;* which the psalmist so often prays for.

But this leading of the Spirit is exceedingly diverse from what some call so; which consists, according to them—not in teaching them God's statutes and precepts already given, but—in giving them new precepts, by immediate inward speech or suggestion. They do not determine what is the will of God by any taste, relish, or judgment of the nature of things, but by an immediate dictate concerning the thing to be done; indeed there is no such thing as any judgment or wisdom in the case. Whereas in that leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's children, there is imparted that true wisdom, and holy discretion, so often spoken of in the word of God; which is high above the other way, as the stars are higher than a glow-worm; and that which Balaam and Saul (who sometimes were led by the Spirit in that other way) never had, and no natural man can have, without a change of nature.

What has been said of the nature of spiritual understanding, as consisting most essentially in a *supernatural sense* and relish of the heart, not only shews that there is nothing of it in this falsely supposed *leading of the Spirit;* but also shews the *difference* between *spiritual understanding*, and all kinds and forms of *enthusiasm*, all imaginary sights of God, and Christ, and heaven; all supposed *witnessing* of the Spirit and testimonies of the love of God by immediate inward suggestion; all *impressions* of future events, and immediate revelations of any secret facts whatsoever. Hereby we see how different is true spiritual religion, and all enthusiastical impressions and applications of scripture, as though they were words now immediately spoken by God to a particular person, in a new meaning, and carrying something more in them, than the words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all interpretations of the mystical meaning of the scripture, by supposed immediate revelation. None of these things consist in a divine sense and relish of the *heart*, of the holy beauty and excellency of divine things; nor have they any thing to do with such a sense; but all consist in impressions in the *head;* all are to be referred to the head of *impressions on the imagina-*

tion, and consist in exciting external ideas in the mind, either of outward shapes and colours, or words spoken, or letters written, or ideas of things external and sensible, belonging to actions done, or events accomplished, or to be accomplished. An enthusiastical supposed manifestation of the love of God, is made by exciting an idea of a smiling countenance, or some other pleasant outward appearance, or by the idea of pleasant words spoken, or written, excited in the imagination, or some pleasant bodily sensation. So when persons have an imaginary revelation of some secret fact, it is by exciting external ideas; either of some words, implying a declaration of that fact, or some visible or sensible circumstances of such a fact. So the supposed leading of the Spirit, to do the will of God, in outward behaviour, is either by exciting the idea of words (which are outward things) in their minds, either the words of scripture, or other words, which they look upon as an immediate command of God, or else by exciting and impressing strongly the ideas of the outward actions themselves. So when an interpretation of a scripture type or allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary way, strongly suggested, it is by suggesting words, as though one secretly whispered and told the meaning; or by exciting other ideas in the imagination.

Such sort of experiences and discoveries as these commonly raise the affections of such as are deluded by them, to a great height, and make a mighty uproar in both soul and body. And a very great part of the false religion that has been in the world, from one age to another, consists in such discoveries as these, and in the affections that flow from them. In such things consisted the experiences of the ancient Pythagoreans among the Heathen, and many others among them, who had strange ecstasies and raptures, and pretended to a divine *afflatus*, and immediate revelations from heaven. In such things as these seem to have consisted the experiences of the Essenes, an ancient sect among the Jews, at and after the times of the apostles. In such things consisted the experiences of many of the ancient Gnostics, the Montanists, and many other sects of ancient heretics, in the primitive ages of the Christian church. And in such things as these consisted the pretended immediate converse with God and Christ, saints and angels, of the Monks, Anchorites, and Recluses, that formerly abounded in the church of Rome. In such things consisted the pretended high experiences, and great spirituality of many sects of enthusiasts, that swarmed in the world after the reformation* And in these things seems to lie the religion of the

* Such as the Anabaptists, Antinomians, and Familists, the followers of N. Stork, Th. Muncer, Jo. Becold, Henry Pleifer, David George, Casper Swenckfield, Henry Nicolas, Johannes Agricola Eislebius; and the many wild enthusiasts that were in England in the days of Oliver Cromwell; and the followers of

many kinds of enthusiasts of the present day. It is by such sort of religion as this chiefly that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light: and it is that which he has ever most successfully employed to confound hopeful and happy revivals of religion, from the beginning of the Christian church to this day. When the Spirit of God is poured out to begin a glorious work, then the old serpent, as fast as possible, and by all means, introduces this bastard religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from time to time soon brought all things into confusion. The pernicious consequence of it is not easily imagined, until we see and are amazed with the awful effects of it, and the dismal desolation it has made. If the revival of true religion be very great in its beginning, yet if this bastard comes in, there is danger of its doing as Gideon's bastard Ahimelech did, who never left until he had slain all his threescore and ten true-born sons, excepting one that was forced to flee. Great and strict therefore should be the watch and guard that ministers maintain against such things, especially at a time of great awakening: for men, especially the common people, are easily bewitched with such things; they having such a glaring and glistering shew of high religion. The devil hiding his own shape, and appearing as an angel of light, men may not be afraid of him.

The imagination, or phantasy, seems to be that wherein are formed all these delusions of Satan, false religion, and counterfeit graces and affections. Here is the devil's grand lurking-place, the very nest of foul and delusive spirits. It is very much to be doubted, whether the devil can come at the *soul* of man to affect it, or to produce any effect whatsoever in it, any other way, than by the phantasy; that power of the soul by which it receives, and is the subject of the species, or ideas of outward and sensible things. As to the laws and means which the Creator has established, for the intercourse and communication of unbodied spirits, we know nothing about them; we do not know by what medium they manifest their thoughts to, or excite thoughts in each other. But as to spirits united to bodies, those bodies are their medium of communication. They have no other medium of acting on other creatures, or being acted on by them, than the body. Therefore it is not to be supposed that Satan can excite any thought, or produce any effect in the soul of man, any otherwise, than by some motion of the animal spirits, or by causing some motion or alteration in something which appertains to the body. There is this reason to think that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the soul any other way than

Mrs. Hutchison, in New England; as appears by the particulars ... accounts given of all these sects, by that eminently holy man, Mr. Samuel, in his *Display of the Spiritual Antichrist*. And in such things as ... the experiences of the late French prophets, and their followers.

by the medium of the body, viz. that he cannot immediately know the thoughts of the soul. This is abundantly declared in the scripture, to be peculiar to the omniscient God. But it is not likely that the devil can *immediately produce* an effect, which is out of the reach of his *immediate view*. It seems unreasonable to suppose, that his immediate agency should be out of his own sight, or that it should be impossible for him to see what he himself immediately does. Is it not unreasonable to suppose, that any intelligent agent should by the act of his will produce effects, according to his understanding, or agreeable to his own thoughts, and that immediately, and yet the effects produced be beyond the reach of his understanding, or where he can have no immediate perception? But if the devil cannot produce thoughts in the soul immediately, or any other way than by the animal spirits, or by the body, then it follows, that he never brings to pass any thing in the soul, but by the imagination or phantasy, or by exciting external ideas. For we know that alterations in the body do immediately excite no other sort of ideas in the mind, but external ones, or those of the outward senses. As to reflection, abstraction, reasoning, &c. and those thoughts and inward motions which are the *fruits* of these acts of the mind, they are not the nearest effects of impressions on the body. So that it must be only by the imagination that Satan has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it, or suggest any thing to it.*. And this seems to be the reason why persons that are under the disease of melancholy,

* "The imagination is that room of the soul, wherein the devil doth often appear. Indeed, (to speak exactly,) the devil hath no efficient power over the rational part of a man: he cannot change the will, he cannot alter the heart of a man. So that the utmost he can do, in tempting a man to sin, is by suasion and suggestion only. But then how doth the devil do this? Even by working upon the imagination. He observeth the temper, and bodily constitution of a man; and thereupon suggests to his fancy and injects his fiery darts thereinto, by which the mind and will come to be wrought upon. The devil then, though he hath no imperious efficacy over thy will, yet because he can thus stir and move thy imagination, and thou being naturally destitute of grace, canst not withstand these suggestions; hence it is that any sin in thy imagination, though but in the outward works of the soul, yet doth quickly lay hold on all. And indeed, by this means do arise those horrible delusions, that are in many erroneous ways of religion: all is because their imaginations are corrupted. Yea, how often are these diabolical delusions of the imagination, taken for the gracious operations of God's Spirit?—It is from hence that many have pretended to enthusiasms; they leave the scriptures, and wholly attend to what they perceive and feel within them." (Burgess, on Original Sin, p. 369.)

The great Turrentine, speaking on that question, "What is the power of angels?" says, As to the bodies, there is no doubt, but that they can do a great deal upon all sorts of elementary and sublunary bodies, to move them locally and variously to agitate them. It is also certain, that they can act upon the external and internal senses, to excite them, or to bind them. But as to the rational soul itself, they can do nothing immediately upon that; for to God alone who knows and searches the hearts, and who has them in his hands, does it also appertain to bow and move them withersoever he will. But angels can act upon the rational soul, only mediately by imaginations." (Theolog. Elench. Loc. VII. Quest. 7.)

are commonly so visibly and remarkably subject to the suggestions and temptations of Satan; that being a disease which peculiarly affects the animal spirits, and is attended with weakness of that part of the body which is their fountain, even the brain, which is, as it were, the seat of the phantasy. It is by impressions made on the brain, that any ideas are excited in the mind, by the motion of the animal spirits, or any changes made in the body. The brain being thus weakened and diseased, it is less under the command of the higher faculties of the soul, and yields the more easily to extrinsic impressions, and is overpowered by the disordered motions of the animal spirits; and so the devil has greater advantage to affect the mind, by working on the imagination. And thus Satan, when he casts in those horrid suggestions into the minds of many melancholy persons, in which they have no hand themselves, does it by exciting imaginary ideas, either of some dreadful words or sentences, or other horrid outward ideas. And when he tempts other persons who are not melancholy, he does it by presenting to the imagination, in a lively and alluring manner, the objects of their lusts, or by exciting ideas of words, and so by them exciting thoughts; or by promoting an imagination of outward actions, events, circumstances, &c. Innumerable are the ways by which the mind might be led on to all kind of evil thoughts, by exciting external ideas in the imagination.

If persons keep no guard at these avenues of Satan, by which he has access to the soul to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And especially, if instead of guarding against him, they lay themselves open to him, and seek and invite him, because he appears as an angel of light, and counterfeits the illuminations and graces of the Spirit of God, by inward whispers, and immediate suggestions of facts and events, pleasant voices, beautiful images, and other impressions on the imagination. There are many who are deluded by such things, are lifted up with them, and seek after them. They have a continued course of them, and can have them almost when they will; and especially when their pride and vain-glory has most occasion for them, to make a shew of them before company. It is with them, something as it is with those who are professors of the art of telling where lost things are to be found, by impressions made on their imaginations; they laying themselves open to the devil, he is always at hand to give them the desired impression.

Before I finish what I would say on this head of imaginations, counterfeiting spiritual light, and affections arising from them, I would renewedly (to prevent misunderstanding of what has been said) desire it may be observed, that I am far from determining, that no affections are spiritual which are attended with imaginary

ideas. Such is the nature of man, that he can scarcely think of any thing intensely, without some kind of outward ideas. They arise and interpose themselves unavoidably, in the course of a man's thoughts; though oftentimes they are very confused, and are not what the mind regards. When the mind is much engaged, and the thoughts intense, oftentimes the imagination is more strong, and the outward idea more lively, especially in persons of some constitutions of body. But there is a great difference between these two things, viz. *lively imaginations arising from strong affections*, and *strong affections arising from lively imaginations*. The former may be, and doubtless often is, in case of truly gracious affections. The affections do not arise from the imagination, nor have any dependence upon it; but on the contrary, the imagination is only the accidental effect, or consequent of the affection, through the infirmity of human nature. But when the latter is the case, as it often is, that the affection arises from the imagination, and is built upon it as its foundation, instead of a spiritual illumination or discovery, then is the affection, however elevated, worthless and vain. And this is the drift of what has been now said, of impressions on the imagination. Having observed this, I proceed to another mark of gracious affections.

SECT. V.

Truly gracious affections are attended with a conviction of the reality and certainty of divine things.

This seems to be implied in the text that was laid as the foundation of this discourse, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet* BELIEVING, *ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* All gracious persons have a solid, full, thorough and effectual conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel. They no longer halt between two opinions; the great doctrines of the gospel cease to be any longer doubtful things, or matters of opinion, which, though probable, are yet disputable; but with them, they are points settled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their all upon their truth. Their conviction is an *effectual* conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious, and invisible things of the gospel, have the *influence* of real and certain things upon them; they have the *weight* and *power* of real things in their hearts; and accordingly rule in their affections, and govern them through the course of their lives. With respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and the great things he has revealed concerning himself, and his Father, and another world, they have not only a

predominating opinion that these things are true, and so yield their assent, as they do in many other matters of doubtful speculation; but they *see that it is really so:* their eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as to the things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal purposes and designs, concerning fallen man, and the glorious and everlasting things prepared for the saints in another world, they see that they are so indeed: and therefore these things are of great weight with them, and have a mighty power upon their hearts, and influence over their practice, in some measure answerable to their infinite importance.

That all true Christians have such a kind of conviction, is abundantly manifest from the holy scriptures. I will mention a few places out of many; Matth. xvi. 15—17. *But whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona:—my Father which is in heaven hath revealed it unto thee.* John vi. 68, 69. *Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and art sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* John xvii. 6—8. *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.—Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* Acts viii. 37. *If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest.* 2 Cor. iv. 11—14. *We which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus sake.—Death worketh in us.—We having the spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak: knowing, that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* Together with verse 16. *For which cause we faint not.* And verse 18. *While we look not at the things which are seen,* &c. And chap. v. 1. *For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God.*—And ver. 6—8. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* 2 Tim. i. 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded thrt he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* Heb. iii. 6. *Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end?* Heb. xi. 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the*

evidence of things not seen: together with that whole chapter, 1 John iv. 13—16. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.* Chap. v. 4, 5. *For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* Therefore truly gracious affections are attended with a conviction and persuasion of the truth of gospel declarations, and a sight of their evidence and reality.

There are many religious affections, which are not attended with such a conviction of the judgment. Many apprehensions and ideas which some call *divine discoveriss*, are *affecting*, but not *convincing*. Though for a little while, they may seem to be more persuaded of the truth of religion, than they used to be, and may yield a forward assent, like many of Christ's hearers, who believe for a while, yet they have no thorough and effectual conviction. There is no great abiding change in them in this respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great things of the gospel; now these things, with regard to reality and certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them quite in another view than they used to do. There are many persons who have been exceedingly raised with religious affections, and think they have been converted, but they do not seem any more convinced of the truth of the gospel, than they used to be; or at least, there is no remarkable alteration. They do not live under the influence and power of a realizing conviction of the infinite and eternal things which the gospel reveals; if they were, it would be impossible for them to live as they do. Because their affections are not attended with a thorough conviction of the mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a show and noise they make, it is like the blaze of tow, or crackling of thorns, or like the forward flourishing blade on stony ground, that has no root, nor deepness of earth to maintain its life.

Some persons, under high affections and a confident persuasion of their good estate, have what they very ignorantly call *seeing the truth* of the word of God, but which is very far from it. They have some text of scripture coming to their minds, in a sudden and extraordinary manner, immediately declaring unto them (as they suppose) that their sins are forgiven, or that God loves them, and will save them; and it may be have a chain of scriptures coming one after another, to the same purpose; and they are convinced that it is truth; *i. e.* they are confident that it

is certainly so, that their sins are forgiven, and God does love them, &c.—they say they know it is so; and when the words of scripture are suggested to them, and as they suppose immediately spoken to them by God, in this meaning, they are ready to cry out, *Truth, truth! it is certainly so! the word of God is true!* And this they call "seeing the truth of the word of God." Whereas the whole of their faith amounts to no more, than only a strong confidence of their own good estate, and so a confidence that those words are true, which they suppose tell them they are in a good estate; when indeed (as was shewn before) there is no scripture which declares that any person is in a good estate directly, or any other way than by consequence. So that this, instead of being a real sight of the truth of the word of God, is a sight of nothing but a phantom, and is all over a delusion. Truly to see the truth of the word of God, is to see the truth of the gospel; which is the glorious doctrine the word of God contains, concerning God, Jesus Christ, the way of salvation by him, and the world of glory that he is entered into, and purchased for all them who believe; and not a revelation that such and such particular persons are true Christians, and shall go to heaven. Therefore those affections which arise from no other persuasion of the truth of the word of God than this, arise from delusion, and not true conviction; and consequently are themselves delusive and vain.

But suppose the religious affections of persons indeed arise from a strong *persuasion* of the truth of the Christian religion; their affections are not the better, unless it be a *reasonable* persuasion or conviction. By a reasonable conviction, I mean a conviction founded on *real evidence*, or upon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction. Men may have a *strong* persuasion that the Christian religion is true, when their persuasion is not at all built on evidence, but altogether on education, and the opinion of others; as many Mahometans are strongly persuaded of the truth of the Mahometan religion, because their fathers, and neighbours, and nation believe it. That belief of the truth of the Christian religion, which is built on the very *same grounds* with that of Mahometans who believe in the Mahometan religion, is the same sort of belief. And though the thing believed happens to be better; yet that does not make the belief itself to be of a better sort, for though the thing believed happens to be true, yet the belief of it is not owing to this truth, but to education. So that as the conviction is no better than the Mahometans' conviction, so the affections that flow from it, are no better, in themselves, than the religious affections of Mahometans.

But suppose the belief of Christian doctrines, be not merely from education, but indeed from reasons and arguments, it will

not from thence necessarily follow, that their affections are truly gracious: for in order to that, it is requisite, not only that the belief which their affections arise from, should be a *reasonable*, but also a *spiritual* belief or conviction. I suppose none will doubt but that some natural men yield a kind of assent of their judgments to the truth of the Christian religion, from the rational proofs or arguments that are offered to evince it. Judas, without doubt, thought Jesus to be the Messiah, from the things which he saw and heard; but yet all along was a devil. So in John ii. 23—25, we read of *many that believed in Christ's name, when they saw the miracles that he did;* whom yet Christ knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So Simon the sorcerer believed, when he beheld the miracles and signs which were done; but yet remained *in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity*, Acts viii. 13, 23. And if there is such a belief or assent of the judgment in some natural men, none can doubt but that religious affections may arise from that assent or belief; as we read of some who *believed for a while* that were greatly affected, and *anon with joy received the word.*

It is evident that there is a *spiritual* conviction of the truth, or a belief peculiar to those who are spiritual, who are regenerated, and who have the Spirit of God, in his holy communications, dwelling in them as a vital principle. So that their conviction does not only differ from that which natural men have, in that it is accompanied with good works; but the *belief itself* is diverse, the assent and conviction of the judgment is of a kind peculiar to those who are spiritual, and of which natural men are wholly destitute. This is evident by the scripture, if any thing at all is so; John xvii. 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me.* Tit. i. 1. *According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.* John xvi. 27. *The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.* 1 John iv. 15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Chap. v. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* Verse 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.*

What a *spiritual conviction* of the judgment, is, we are naturally led to determine from what has been said already, under the former head of a *spiritual understanding*. The conviction of the judgment arises from the illumination of the understanding: the passing of a right judgment on things, depends on a right apprehension. And therefore it follows, that a *spiritual* conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel, is such a conviction as arises from having a spiritual apprehension of those things in the mind. And this is also evident from the

scripture, which often represents a saving belief of the reality and divinity of the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, as what proceeds from the Spirit of God enlightening the mind. Hence right apprehensions of the nature of those things; the Spirit as it were unveiling, or revealing them, and enabling the mind to view them as they are. Luke x. 21, 22. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast* HID *these things from the wise and prudent, and hast* REVEALED *them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father: and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will* REVEAL *him.* John vi. 40. *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which* SEETH *the Son, and* BELIEVETH *on him, may have everlasting life.* Where it is plain, that true faith arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And John xvii. 6—8. *I have* MANIFESTED *thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.—Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* Christ's manifesting God's name to the disciples, or giving them a true apprehension of divine things, was that whereby they knew that Christ's doctrine was of God, and that Christ himself was sent by him. Matth. xvi. 16, 17. *Simon Peter said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not* REVEALED *it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.* Gal. i. 14—16. *Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to* REVEAL *his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

If *that* is a spiritual conviction of the divinity and reality of the things exhibited in the gospel, which arises from a *spiritual understanding* of those things; I have shewn already what that is. In short, it consists in a sense and taste of the divine, supreme, and holy excellency and beauty of those things. So that then is the mind *spiritually convinced* of the divinity and truth of the great things of the gospel, when that conviction arises, either directly or remotely, from such a sense or view of their divine excellency and glory as is there exhibited. This clearly follows from what has been already said; and for this the scripture is very plain and express: 2 Cor. iv. 3—6. *But if our gos-*

pel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that BELIEVE *not, lest the light of the* GLORIOUS GOSPEL *of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the* LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD, *in the face of Jesus Christ.* Together with the last verse of the foregoing chapter, which introduces this, *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the* GLORY OF THE LORD, *are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Nothing can be more evident, than that a saving belief of the gospel is here spoken of by the apostle, as arising from the mind being enlightened to behold the divine glory of the things it exhibits. This view or sense of the divine glory, and unparalleled beauty of the things exhibited to us in the gospel, has a tendency to convince the mind of their divinity two ways; first, *directly*, and secondly, more *indirectly* and *remotely*.

I. A view of the divine glory *directly*, convinces the mind of the divinity of these things, as this glory is in itself a direct, clear, and all-conquering evidence of it; especially when clearly discovered, or when this supernatural sense is given in a good degree.

He that has his judgment thus *directly* convinced and assured of the divinity of gospel truths by a clear view of their divine glory, has a *reasonable* conviction. His assurance is altogether agreeable to reason; because the divine glory and beauty of divine things is *in itself* a real evidence of their divinity, and the most direct and strong. He that truly sees the divine, transcendent, supreme glory of those things which are divine, does as it were know their divinity *intuitively*; he not only *argues*, but *sees* that they are divine. He sees that in them wherein divinity chiefly consists; for in this glory, which is so vastly and inexpressibly distinguished from the glory of artificial things, and all other glory, mainly consists the true notion of divinity. God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above them, chiefly by his divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty. They therefore that see the stamp of this glory in divine things, they see divinity in them, they see God in them, and so see them to be divine; because they see *that* in them wherein the truest idea of divinity consists. Thus a soul may have a kind of intuitive knowledge of the divinity of the things exhibited in the gospel; not that he judges the doctrines of the gospel to be from God, without any argument or deduction at all; but it is without any long chain of arguments; the

argument is but one, and the evidence direct; the mind ascends to the truth of the gospel but one step, and that is its divine glory.

It would be very strange, if any professing Christian should deny it to be possible, that there should be an excellency in divine things, which is so transcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other things, that if it were seen, would evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt, but that things which are *divine*, that appertain to the Supreme Being, are vastly different from things that are *human*. There is a God-like, high, and glorious excellency in them, so distinguishing them from the things which are of men, that the difference is ineffable; and therefore such as if seen, will have a most convincing, satisfying influence upon any one, that they are *what they are*, viz. divine. Doubtless there is that glory and excellency in the Divine Being, by which he is so infinitely distinguished from all other beings, that if it were seen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreasonable to deny, that it is possible for God to give manifestations of this distinguishing excellency, in things by which he is pleased to make himself known; and that this distinguishing excellency may be clearly seen in them. There are *natural* excellencies that are very evidently distinguishing of the subjects or authors, to any one who beholds them. How vastly is the speech of an intelligent man different from that of a little child! And how greatly distinguished is the speech of some men of great genius, as Homer, Cicero, Milton, Locke, Addison, and others, from that of many other intelligent men! There are no limits to be set to the degrees of manifestation of mental excellency, that there may be in speech. But the appearances of the *natural* perfections of God, in the manifestations he makes of himself, may doubtless be unspeakably more evidently distinguishing, than the appearances of those excellencies of worms of the dust, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with mankind, and their works, by viewing the sun, may know it is no human work. And it is reasonable to suppose, that when Christ comes at the end of the world, in the glory of his Father, it will be with such ineffable appearances of divinity, as will leave no doubt to the inhabitants of the world, even the most obstinate infidels, that he who appears is a divine person. But above all, do the manifestations of the *moral* and *spiritual* glory of the Divine Being, (which is the proper beauty of the divinity), bring their own evidence, and tend to assure the heart. Thus the disciples were assured that Jesus was the Son of God, for *they beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. When Christ appeared in his transfiguration to his disciples, as an outward glory to their bodily eyes—which was a sweet and admira-

ble symbol and semblance of his spiritual glory—together with his spiritual glory itself, manifested to their minds; the manifestation was such as did perfectly, and with good reason, *assure* them of his divinity; as appears by what one of them says concerning it, 2 Pet. i. 16—18. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty: for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.* The apostle calls that mount, *the holy mount*, because the manifestations of Christ there made to their minds, and with which they were especially impressed and ravished, was the glory of his *holiness*, or the beauty of his *moral excellency:* or, as another of these disciples, who saw it, expresses it, *His glory, as full of grace and truth.*

Now this distinguishing glory of the Divine Being has its brightest manifestation in the things exhibited to us in the *gospel;* the doctrines there taught, the word there spoken, and the divine counsels, acts and works there revealed. These things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing representations and exhibitions of the glory of God's moral perfections, that ever were made to the world. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential manifestation of divine glory in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be such a thing as *seeing* it: what should hinder but that it *may* be seen? It is no argument that it *cannot* be seen, because some *do not* see it; though they may be discerning men in temporal matters. If there be such ineffable, distinguishing, evidential excellencies in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose, that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special influence and enlightenings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon force of mind to discern the distinguishing excellencies of the works of authors of great genius. Those things in Milton, which to mean judges appear tasteless and imperfections, are his inimitable excellencies in the eyes of those who are of greater discerning, and better taste. And if there be a book of which God is the author, it is most reasonable to suppose, that the distinguishing glories of his word are of such a kind, as that the sin and corruption of men's hearts—which above all things alienate them from the Deity, and make the heart dull and stupid to any sense or taste of those things wherein the moral glory of the divine perfections consists—would blind them from discerning the beauties of such a book; and that therefore they will not see them, but as God is pleased to enlighten them, and restore an holy taste, to discern and relish divine beauties.

This sense of the spiritual excellency and beauty of divine things, also tends *directly* to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel. Very many of the most important things declared in the gospel are hid from the eyes of natural men, the truth of which in effect consists in this excellency, or so immediately depends upon it, and results from it, that in this excellency being *seen*, the *truth* of those things is seen. As soon as ever the eyes are opened to behold a holy beauty and amiableness in divine things, a multitude of most important doctrines of the gospel that depend upon it, (which all appear strange and dark to natural men,) are at once seen to be true. As for instance, hereby appears the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding *evil of sin;* for the same eye that discerns the transcendent beauty of holiness, necessarily therein sees the exceeding odiousness of sin: the same taste which relishes the sweetness of true moral good, tastes the bitterness of moral evil. And by this means a man sees his *own sinfulness* and loathsomeness; for he has now a sense to discern objects of this nature; and so sees the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding sinfulness of mankind, which before he did not see. He now sees the dreadful pollution of his heart, and the desperate depravity of his nature, in a new manner; for his soul has now a sense given it to feel the pain of such a disease. This shows him the truth of what the scripture reveals concerning the corruption of man's nature, his *original sin*, his ruinous condition, his *need* of a Saviour, and of the mighty *power of God* to renew his heart, and change his nature. Men by seeing the true excellency of holiness, see the glory of all those things which both reason and scripture shew to be in the *Divine Being;* for it has been shown, that the glory of them depends on this. And hereby they see the truth of all that the scripture declares concerning God's glorious excellency and majesty, his being the fountain of all good, the only happiness of the creature, &c. This again shews the mind the truth of what the scripture teaches concerning the evil of sin against so glorious a God; also the truth of what it teaches concerning *sin's just desert* of that dreadful punishment which it reveals; and concerning the impossibility of our offering any satisfaction, or sufficient atonement for that which is so infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shews the truth of what the scripture reveals concerning the necessity of a Saviour, to offer an atonement of infinite value for sin. This sense of spiritual beauty enables the soul to see the glory of those things which the gospel reveals concerning the *person of Christ;* and so enables to see the exceeding beauty and dignity of his person, appearing in what the gospel exhibits of his word, works, state, and life; and this apprehension of the superlative dignity of h[is]

person, shews the truth of what the gospel declares concerning the value of his *blood and righteousness;* the infinite excellency of that offering he has made to God for us, its sufficiency to atone for our sins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God discovers the *way of salvation* by Christ; the soul sees the fitness and suitableness of this way, the admirable wisdom of the contrivance, and the perfect answerableness to our necessities of the provision that the gospel exhibits. A sense of true divine beauty being given, the soul discerns the beauty of every part of the gospel-scheme. This also shews the soul the truth of what the word of God declares concerning man's *chief happiness*, as consisting in holy exercises and enjoyments, and the unspeakable glory of the heavenly state. What the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the writings of the apostles declare concerning the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, is now all plain; and also what the scripture teaches concerning the reasons and grounds of our duty. The truth of all these things revealed in the scripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appear to the soul, only by that spiritual taste of divine beauty, which has been spoken of; they being hidden things before.

And besides all this, the truth of all those things which the scripture says about *experimental religion*, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the soul, that one who knew the heart of man, better than we know our own hearts, and perfectly knew the nature of virtue and holiness, was the author of the scriptures. And the opening to view, with such clearness, such a world of wonderful and glorious truth in the gospel, that before was unknown, being quite above the view of a natural eye, but now appearing so clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible influence on the soul, to persuade it of the divinity of the gospel.

Unless men may come to a reasonable solid persuasion and conviction of the truth of the gospel, by internal evidences in the way that has been spoken, viz. by a sight of its glory, it is impossible that those who are illiterate, and unacquainted with history, should have any thorough and effectual conviction of it at all. They may without this see a great deal of probability of it; it may be reasonable for them to give much credit to what learned men and historians tell them; and they may tell them so much, that it may look very probable and rational to them, that the Christian religion is true; and so much that they would be very unreasonable not to entertain this opinion. But to have a conviction, so clear, and evident, and assuring, as to be sufficient to induce them, with boldness to sell all, confidently and fearlessly to run the venture of the loss of all things, and of enduring the most exquisite and long continued torments, and to trample the

world under foot, and count all things but dung for Christ, the evidence they can have from history, cannot be sufficient. It is impossible that men, who have not something of a general view of the historical world, or the series of history from age to age, should come at the force of arguments for the truth of Christianity, drawn from history, to that degree, as effectually to induce them to venture their all upon it. After all that learned men have said to them, there will remain innumerable doubts on their minds; they will be ready, when pinched with some great trial of their faith, to say, "How do I know this, or that? How do I know when these histories were written? Learned men tell me these histories were so and so attested in their day; but how do I know that there were such attestations then? They tell me there is equal reason to believe these facts, as any whatsoever that are related at such a distance; but how do I know that other facts which are related of those ages, ever were?" Those who have not something of a general view of the series of historical events, and of the state of mankind from age to age, cannot see the clear evidence from hisstory of the truth of facts in distant ages; but there will remain endless doubts and scruples.

But the gospel was not given only for learned men. There are at least nineteen in twenty, if not ninety-nine in a hundred, of those for whom the scriptures were written, who are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of the divine authority of the scriptures, by such arguments as learned men use. If men who have been brought up in heathenism, must wait for a clear and certain conviction of the truth of Christianity, until they have learning and acquaintance with the histories of politer nations, enough to see clearly the force of such kind of arguments, it will make the evidence of the gospel, to them, immensely cumbersome, and will render the propagation of the gospel among them infinitely difficult. Miserable is the condition of the Houssatunnuck Indians and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity, if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in any other way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided for his people, no more than *probable* evidences of the truth of the gospel. He has with great care abundantly provided, and given them the most convincing, assuring, satisfying, and manifold evidence of his faithfulness in the covenant of grace; and as David says, *made a covenant, ordered in all things and sure.* Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same time, he would not fail of ordering the matter so, that there should not be wanting as great and clear evidence, *that this is his covenant*, and that these promises, are his promises; or, which is the same thing, that the Chris-

tian religion is true, and that the gospel is his word. Otherwise in vain are those great assurances he has given of his faithfulness in his covenant, by confirming it with his oath, and so variously establishing it by seals and pledges. For the evidence that it is his covenant, is properly the foundation on which all the force and effect of those other assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some sort of evidence which God has given, that this covenant, and these promises are his, beyond all mere probability; that there are some grounds of *assurance* of it held forth, which, if we are not blind to them, tend to give a higher persuasion, than any arguing from history, human tradition, &c. which the illiterate, and unacquainted with history, are capable of; yea, that which is good ground of the highest and most perfect assurance, that mankind have in any case whatsoever; agreeable to those high expressions which the apostle uses, Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near in* FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH. And Col. ii. 2. *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto* ALL RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, *to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.* It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest evidence of those things which are greatest, and the truth of which is of greatest importance to us: and that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect assurance thereof. But it is certain, that such an assurance is not to be attained by the greater part of them who live under the gospel, by arguments fetched from ancient traditions, histories, and monuments.

And if we come to fact and experience, there is not the least reason to suppose, that one in a hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their conviction of the truth of the gospel this way. If we read over the histories of the many thousands that died martyrs for Christ, since the beginning of the reformation, and have cheerfully undergone extreme tortures, in a confidence of the truth of the gospel, and consider their circumstances and advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured persuasion, this way; or indeed for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an assurance, from such arguments! Many of them were weak women and children, and the greater part of them illiterate persons; many of whom had been brought up in popish ignorance and darkness, were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in times, wherein those arguments for the truth of Christianity from antiquity and history, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, it is but very lately that these arguments

have been set in a clear and convincing light, even by learned men themselves: and since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough believers, among those who have been educated in the true religion; infidelity never prevailed so much, in any age, as in this, wherein these arguments are handled to the greatest advantage.

The true martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in *opinion* that the gospel of Christ is true, but *those that have seen the truth of it;* as the very name of martyrs or witnesses (by which they are called in scripture) implies.—Those are very improperly called witnesses of the truth of any thing, who only declare they are very much of opinion that such a thing is true. Those only are proper witnesses, who can, and do testify that they have seen the truth of the thing they assert; John iii. 11. *We speak that we do know, and* testify *that we have seen.* John i. 34. *And I* saw, *and* bare record, *that this is the Son of God.* 1 John iv. 14. *And we have* seen, *and do* testify, *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* Acts xxii. 14, 15. *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst* know *his will, and* see *that just One, and should* hear *the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his* witness *unto all men, of what thou hast* seen *and* heard. But the true martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his witnesses: and all the saints, who by their holy practice under great trials declare that faith *which is the* SUBSTANCE *of things hoped for, and the* EVIDENCE *of things not seen,* are called witnesses, (Heb. xi. 1. and xii. 1.) By their profession and practice they declare their assurance of the truth and divinity of the gospel, having had the eyes of their minds enlightened to see divinity in the gospel, or to behold that unparalleled, ineffably excellent, and truly divine glory shining in it, which is altogether distinguishing, evidential, and convincing: so that they may truly be said to have seen God in it, to have seen that it is indeed divine; and so can speak in the style of witnesses. They can not only say, that *they think* the gospel is divine, but that *it is divine,* giving it in as their testimony, because they have seen it to be so. Doubtless, Peter, James, and John, after they had seen that excellent glory of Christ in the mount, would have been ready, when they came down, to speak in the language of witnesses, and to say positively that *Jesus is the Son of God;* as Peter says, *they were eye-witnesses,* 2 Pet. i. 16. And so all nations will be ready positively to say this, when they shall behold his glory at the day of judgment; though that will be universally seen, will be only his natural glory, and not his moral and spiritual glory, which is much more distinguishing.

But yet, it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual sight of the divine glory of the gospel, there is a great va-

riety in degrees of strength of faith, as there is a vast variety of the degrees of clearness of views of this glory: but there is no true and saving faith, or spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the truth of the gospel, that has nothing in it, of this manifestation of its internal evidence, in some degree. The gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad a begging for its evidence, so much as some think: it has its highest and most proper evidence in itself. Though great use may be made of external arguments, they are not to be neglected, but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly serviceable to awaken unbelievers, and bring them to serious consideration, and to confirm the faith of true saints; yea, they may be in some respects subservient *to the begetting* of a saving faith in men. Though what was said before remains true, that there is no spiritual conviction of the judgment, but what arises from an apprehension of the spiritual beauty and glory of divine things: for, as has been observed, this apprehension or view has a tendency to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, two ways; either directly or indirectly.—Having therefore already observed how it does this directly, I proceed now,

II. To observe how a view of this divine glory convinces the mind of the truth of Christianity, more *indirectly*.

First, It doth so, as *prejudices* of the heart against the truth of divine things are hereby removed, so that the mind thereby lies open to the force of the reasons which are offered. The mind of man is naturally full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind; but when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys that enmity, and removes the prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to be open and free. Hence is a vast difference, as to the force that arguments have to convince the mind. Hence was the very different effect which Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples, from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharisees: not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved, but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, which the Scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed, by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and his doctrine.

Secondly, It not only removes the hinderances of reason, but positively *helps* reason. It makes even the speculative notions more lively. It assists and engages the attention of the mind to that kind of objects, which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and more clearly to see their mutual relations. The ideas themselves, which otherwise are dim and obscure, by this means have light cast upon them, and are impressed with greater strength,

so that the mind can better judge of them; as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them in their true forms and mutual relations, and to see the evidences of divine wisdom and skill in their contrivance, than he that sees them in a dim star-light, or twilight.

What has been said, may serve in some measure to shew the nature of a spiritual conviction of the truth and reality of divine things; and so to distinguish truly gracious affections from others; for gracious affections are evermore attended with such a conviction of the judgment. But before I dismiss this head, it will be needful to observe the ways whereby some are deceived, with respect to this matter; and take notice of several things that are sometimes taken for a spiritual and saving belief of the truth, which are indeed very diverse from it.

1. There is a degree of conviction of the truth of the great things of religion, that arises from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God. The more lively and sensible apprehension of the things of religion, with respect to what is *natural* in them —such as natural men have who are under awakenings and common illuminations—will give some degree of conviction of the truth, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For hereby they see the manifestations made in the holy scriptures, of the natural perfections of God; such as his greatness, power, and awful majesty; which tends to convince the mind, that this is the word of a great and terrible God. From the tokens there are of God's greatness and majesty in his word and works, of which they have a great sense, from the common influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater conviction that these are indeed the word and works of a very great invisible Being. And the lively apprehension of the greatness of God, which natural men may have, tends to make them sensible of the great guilt, which sin against such a God brings, and the dreadfulness of his wrath for sin. And this tends to cause them more easily and fully to believe the revelation the scripture makes of another world, and of the extreme misery it threatens, there to be inflicted on sinners. And so from that sense of the great natural good there is in the things of religion, which is sometimes given in common illuminations, men may be the more induced to believe the truth of religion. These things persons may have, and yet have no sense of the beauty and amiableness of the moral and holy excellency of religion; and therefore no spiritual conviction of their truth. But yet such convictions are sometimes mistaken for saving convictions, and the affections flowing from them, for saving affections.

2. The extraordinary impressions which are made on the imaginations of some persons, in visions, and immediate strong impulses and suggestions, as though they saw sights, and had words spoken to them, may, and often do beget a strong persuasion of the truth of invisible things. Though the general tendency of such things, in their final issue, is to draw men off from the word of God, and to cause them to reject the gospel, and to establish unbelief and Atheism; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident persuasion of the truth of some things that are revealed in the scriptures; however their confidence is founded in delusion, and so nothing worth. As for instance, if a person has by some invisible agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his imagination, the appearance of a bright light, and glorious form of a person seated on a throne, with great external majesty and beauty, uttering some remarkable words, with great force and energy; the person who is the subject of such an operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible agents, spiritual beings, from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no hand himself in this extraordinary effect, which he has experienced. He may also be confident, that this is Christ whom he saw and heard speaking; and this may make him confident that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a throne in heaven, as he saw him; and may be confident that the words which he heard him speak are true, &c. in the same manner as the lying miracles of the Papists, may for the present beget in the minds of the ignorant, deluded people, a strong persuasion of the truth of many things declared in the New Testament. Thus when the images of Christ, in Popish churches, are on some extraordinary occasions, made by priestcraft to appear to the people as if they wept, and shed fresh blood, and moved, and uttered such and such words; the people may be verily persuaded that it is a miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that what they are told of his death and sufferings, resurrection and ascension, and present government of the world, is true; for they may look upon this miracle, as a certain evidence of all these things, and a kind of ocular demonstration of them. This may be the influence of these lying wonders for the present, though the general tendency of them is not to convince that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but finally to promote Atheism. Even the intercourse which Satan has with witches, and their often experiencing his immediate power, has a tendency to convince them of the truth of some of the doctrines of religion; as particularly the reality of an invisible world, or world of spirits, contrary to the doctrine of the Sadducees. The general tendency of Satan's influences is delusion; but yet he

may mix some truth with his lies, that his lies may not be so easily discovered.

Multitudes are deluded with a counterfeit faith, from impressions on their imagination, in the manner now mentioned. They say they know that there is a God, for they have seen him; they know that Christ is the Son of God, for they have seen him in his glory; they know that Christ died for sinners, for they have seen him hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; they know there is a heaven and a hell, for they have seen the misery of the damned souls in hell, and the glory of saints and angels in heaven, (meaning some external representations, strongly impressed on their imagination;) they know that the scriptures are the word of God, and that such and such promises in particular are his word, for they have heard him speak them to *them*, they came to their minds suddenly and immediately from God, without their having any hand in it.

3. Persons may seem to have their belief of the truth greatly increased, when the foundation of it is only a persuasion of their interest in them. They first, by some means or other, take up a confidence, that if there be a Christ and a heaven, they are *theirs;* and this prejudices them more in favour of their truth. When they hear of the great and glorious things of religion, it is with this notion, that all these things belong to them; and hence easily become confident that they are true; they look upon it to be greatly for their interest that they should be true. It is very obvious what a strong influence men's interest and inclinations have on their judgments. While a natural man thinks, that if there be a heaven and a hell, the latter and not the former belongs to him; then he will be hardly persuaded that there is a heaven or hell. But when he comes to be persuaded, that hell belongs only to others and not to him, then he can easily allow the reality of hell, and exclaim against the senselessness and sottishness of others in neglecting means of escape from it: and being confident that he is a child of God, and that God has promised heaven to him, he may seem strong in the faith of its reality, and may have a great zeal against that infidelity which denies it. But I proceed to another distinguishing sign of gracious affections.

SECT. VI.

Gracious affections are attended with evangelical humiliation.

Evangelical humiliation is a sense that a Christian has of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness, with an answerable frame of heart. There is a distinction to be made between a *legal* and *evangelical* humiliation. The former is what men may have while in a state of nature, and have no gracious affection; the latter is peculiar to true saints. The former is from the common influence of the Spirit of God, assisting natural principles, and especially natural conscience; the latter is from the special influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exercising supernatural and divine principles. The former is from the mind being assisted to a greater sense of religious things, as to their natural properties and qualities, and particularly of the natural perfections of God, such as his greatness, terrible majesty, &c.—which were manifested to the congregation of Israel, in giving the law at Mount Sinai—the latter is from a sense of the transcendent beauty of divine things in their moral qualities. In the former, a sense of the awful greatness, and natural perfections of God, and of the strictness of his law, convinces men that they are exceeding sinful and guilty, and exposed to the wrath of God, as it will convince wicked men and devils at the day of judgment; but they do not see their own *odiousness* on account of sin; they do not see the hateful nature of sin; a sense of this is given in *evangelical humiliation*, by a discovery of the beauty of God's holiness and moral perfection. In a *legal humiliation* men are made sensible that they are nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly insufficient to help themselves; as wicked men will be at the day of judgment: but they have not *an answerable frame of heart*, consisting in a disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone. This disposition is given only in *evangelical* humiliation, by overcoming the heart, and changing its inclination, by a discovery of God's holy beauty. In a legal humiliation, the conscience is convinced; as the consciences of all will be most perfectly at the day of judgment; but because there is no spiritual understanding, the will is not bowed, nor the inclination altered. In legal humiliation, men are brought to despair of helping themselves; in evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themselves: in the former, they are subdued and forced to the ground; in the latter, they are brought sweetly to yield, and freely and with delight to prostrate themselves at the feet of God.

Legal humiliation has in it no spiritual good, nothing of the nature of true virtue; whereas evangelical humiliation is that wherein the excellent beauty of Christian grace does very much consist. Legal humiliation is useful, as a means in order to evangelical; as a common knowledge of the things of religion is a means requisite in order to spiritual knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no *humility;* as the wicked at the day of judgment will be thoroughly convinced that they have no righteousness, but are altogether sinful, exceeding guilty, and justly exposed to eternal damnation—and be fully sensible of their own helplessness—without the least mortification of the pride of their hearts. But the essence of evangelical humiliation consists in such *humility* as becomes a creature in itself exceeding sinful, under a dispensation of grace; consisting in a mean esteem of himself, as in himself nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a mortification of a disposition to exalt himself, and a free renunciation of his own glory.

This is a great and most essential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the gospel, every thing appertaining to the new covenant, and all God's dispensations towards fallen man, are calculated to bring to pass this effect. They that are destitute of this, have no true religion, whatever profession they may make, and high soever their religious affections may be; Hab. ii. 4. *Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith; i. e.* he shall live by his faith on God's righteousness, and grace, and not his own goodness and excellency. God has abundantly manifested in his word, that this is what he has a peculiar respect to in his saints, and and that nothing is acceptable to him without it; Psal. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* Psal. li. 17. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Psal. cxxxviii. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.* Prov. iii. 34. *He giveth grace unto the lowly.* Is. lvii. 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Is. lxvi. 1, 2. *Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool:—but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* Micah vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Matth. v. 3. *Blessed are the*

poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of God. Matth. xviii. 3, 4. *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* Mark x. 15. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.* The centurion, (Luke vii.) acknowledged that *he was not worthy that Christ should enter under his roof,* and that *he was not worthy to come to him.* See the manner of a sinner coming to Christ, Luke vii. 37, &c. *And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head.* She did not think the hair of her head, which is the natural crown and glory of a woman, (1 Cor. xi. 15.) too good to wipe the feet of Christ. Jesus most graciously accepted her, and says, *Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.* The woman of Canaan submitted to Christ, in his saying, *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs,* and did as it were own that she was worthy to be called a dog; whereupon Christ says unto her, *O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee, even as thou wilt,* Matth. xv. 26—28. The prodigal son said, *I will arise, and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants,* Luke xv. 18, &c. See also Luke xviii. 9, &c. *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others,* &c.—*The publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.* Matth. xxviii. 9. *And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.* Col. iii. 12. *Put ye on, as the elect of God,—humbleness of mind.* Ezek. xx. 41, 43. *I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people,* &c.—*And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed.* Chap. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31. *A new heart also will I give unto you,—and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,* &c.—*Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* Chap. xvi. 63. *That thou mayst remember and be con-*

founded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord. Job xlii. 6. *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

As we would therefore make the holy scriptures our rule, in judging of the nature of true religion, and judging of our own religious qualifications and state; it concerns us greatly to look at this humiliation, as one of the most essential things pertaining to true Christianity*. This is the principal part of the great Christian duty of *self-denial.* That duty consists in two things, *viz. first*, In a man's denying his worldly inclinations, and in forsaking and renouncing all worldly objects and enjoyments; and, *secondly*, In denying his natural self-exaltation, and renouncing his own dignity and glory, and in being emptied of himself; so that he does freely, and from his very heart, as it were renounce, and annihilate himself. Thus the Christian doth in evangelical humiliation. The *latter* is the greatest and most difficult part of self-denial: although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural men can come much nearer to the *former* than the latter. Many Anchorites and Recluses have abandoned (though without any true mortification), the wealth, and pleasures, and common enjoyments of the world, who were far from renouncing their own dignity and righteousness. They never denied themselves for Christ, but only sold one lust to feed another, sold a beastly lust to pamper a devilish one; and so were never the better, but their latter end was worse than their beginning. They turned out one black devil to let in seven whites worse than the first, though of a fairer countenance. It is inexpressible, and almost inconceivable, how strong a self-righteous, self-exalting disposition is naturally in man. What will he not do and suffer, to feed and gratify it? What lengths have been gone in a seeming self-denial in other respects, by Essenes and Pharisees, among the Jews; by Papists, many sects of heretics, and enthusiasts, among professing Christians; by many Mahometans; by Pythagorean philosophers, and others, among the Heathen; and all to do sacrifice to this Moloch of spiritual pride or self-righteousness; and that they may have something wherein to exalt themselves before God, and above their fellow-creatures?

* Calvin, in his Institutions, Book II. chap. 2. § 11. says, "I was always exceedingly pleased with that saying of Chrysostom, 'The foundation of our philosophy is humility;' and yet more pleased with that of Augustine, 'As,' says he, the rhetorician being asked, what was the first thing in the rules of eloquence, he answered, Pronunciation; what was the second, pronunciation; what was the third, still he answered, pronunciation. So if you should ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, I would answer, firstly, secondly, and thirdly, and for ever, Humility.

Real humiliation is what all the most glorious hypocrites, who make the most splendid shew of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, grossly fail in. Were it not that this is so much insisted on in scripture, as a most essential thing in true grace; one would be tempted to think that many of the heathen philosophers were truly gracious, in whom so bright an appearance of many virtues, and also great illuminations, and inward fervours and elevations of mind, as though they were truly the subjects of divine illapses and heavenly communications*. It is true, that many hypocrites make great pretences to humility, as well as other graces; and very often there is nothing whatsoever of which they make a higher profession. They endeavour to make a great shew of humility in speech and behaviour; but they commonly make bungling work of it, though glorious work in their own eyes. They cannot find out what a humble speech and behaviour is, or how to speak and act so that there may indeed be a savour of Christian humility in what they say and do: that sweet humble air and mien is beyond their art, being not *led by the Spirit*, or naturally guided to a behaviour becoming holy humility, by the vigour of a lowly spirit within them. And therefore they have no other way, many of them, but to be much in declaring that they are humble, and telling how they were humbled to the dust at such and such times, and abounding in very bad expressions about themselves; such as, *I am the least of all saints, I am a poor vile creature, I am not worthy of the least mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked heart! my heart is worse than the devil! Oh,*

* "Albeit the Pythagoreans were thus famous for Judaic mysterious wisdom, and many moral, as well as natural accomplishments; yet were they not exempt from boasting and pride; which was indeed a vice most epidemic, and as it were congenial, among all the philosophers; but in a more particular manner, among the Pythagoreans. So Hornius Hist. Philosoph. L. 3. chap. II. 'The manners of the Pythagoreans were not free from boasting. They were all ΠΕΡΙΑΥΤΟΛΟΓΟΙ, such as abounded in the sense and commendation of their own excellencies, and boasting even almost to the degree of immodesty and impudence, as great Heinsius ad Horat. has rightly observed.' Thus indeed does proud nature delight to walk in the sparks of its own fire. And although many of these old philosophers could, by the strength of their own lights and heats, together with some common elevations and raisures of spirit, (peradventure from a more than ordinary, though not special and saving assistance of the Spirit), abandon many grosser vices; yet they were all deeply immersed in that miserable cursed abyss of spiritual pride: so that all their natural, and moral, and philosophic attainments, did feed, nourish, strengthen, and render most inveterate, this hell-bred pest of their hearts. Yea, those of them that seemed most modest, as the Academics, who professed they knew nothing, and the Cynics, who greatly decried, both in words and habits, the pride of others, yet even they abounded in the most notorious and visible pride. So connatural and morally essential to corrupt nature is this envenomed root, fountain, and plague of spiritual pride; especially where there is any natural, moral, or philosophic excellence to feed the same. Whence Austin rightly judged all these philosophic virtues to be but splendid sins." Gale's *Court of the Gentiles*, Part II. B. ii. chap. 10. § 17.

this cursed heart of mine, &c. Such expressions are very often used, not with a heart broken, not with spiritual mourning, not with the tears of her that washed Jesus' feet with her tears, not as *remembering and being confounded, and never opening their mouth more because of their shame, when God is pacified*, (Ezek. xvi. 63.) but with a light air, with smiles in the countenance, or with a pharisaical affectation. We must believe that they are thus humble, and see themselves so vile, upon the credit of their *say so;* for nothing appears in them of any savour of humility, in the manner of their deportment and deeds. There are many full of expressions of their own vileness, who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright saints by others, as their due; and it is dangerous for any, so much as to hint the contrary, or to carry it towards them any otherwise, than as if we looked upon them some of the chief of Christians. Many are much in exclaiming against their wicked hearts, their great short-comings, and unprofitableness, and in speaking as though they looked on themselves as the meanest of the saints; who yet, if a minister should seriously tell them the same things in private, and should signify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians—and thought they had reason solemnly to consider of their great barrenness and unprofitableness, and falling so much short of many others—it would be more than they could digest; they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be danger of a rooted prejudice in them against such a minister.

Some are abundant in talking against *legal doctrines*, *legal preaching*, and a *legal spirit*, who do but little understand the thing they talk against. A *legal spirit* is a more subtle thing than they imagine, it is too subtle for them. It lurks, and operates, and prevails in their hearts, and they are most notoriously guilty of it, at the same time, when they are inveighing against it. So far as man is not emptied of himself, and of his own righteousness and goodness, in whatever form or shape, so far he is of a *legal spirit*. A spirit of pride of a man's own righteousness, morality, holiness, affection, experience, faith, humiliation, or any goodness whatsoever, is a legal spirit. It was no pride in Adam before the fall, to be of a legal spirit; because of his circumstances, he might seek acceptance by his own righteousness. But a legal spirit in a fallen sinful creature, can be nothing but spiritual pride; and reciprocally, a spiritually proud spirit is a legal spirit. There is no man living lifted up with a conceit of his own experiences and discoveries, and upon the account of them glisters in his own eyes, but what trusts in his experiences, and makes a righteousness of them. However he may use humble terms, and speak of his experiences as of the *great things God has done*

for him, and it may be calls upon others to glorify God for them; yet he that is proud of his experiences, arrogates something to himself, as though his experiences were some dignity of his. And if he looks on them as his own dignity, he necessarily thinks that God looks on them so too; for he necessarily thinks his own opinion of them to be true, and consequently judges that God looks on them as he does; and so unavoidably imagines that God looks on his experiences as a dignity in him, as he looks on them himself; and that he glisters as much in God's eyes, as he does in his own. And thus he trusts in what is inherent in him, to make him shine in God's sight, and recommend him to God. With this encouragement he goes before God in prayer; this makes him to expect much; to think that Christ loves him, and that he is willing to clothe him with his righteousness; because he supposes that he is taken with his experiences and graces. And this is a high degree of living on his own righteousness; and such persons are in the high road to hell. Poor deluded wretches, who think they look so glistering in God's eyes, when they are a smoke in his nose, and are many of them more odious to him, than the most impure beast in Sodom, that makes no pretence to religion! To do as these do, is to *live upon experiences*, according to the true notion of it: and not to do as those who only make use of spiritual experiences as evidences of a state of grace, and in that way receive hope and comfort from them.

There is a sort of men, who indeed abundantly cry down works, and cry up faith in opposition to works, and set up themselves very much as evangelical persons, in opposition to those that are of a legal spirit, and make a fair shew of advancing Christ and the gospel, and the way of free grace; who are indeed some of the greatest enemies to the gospelway of free grace and the most dangerous opposers of pure humble Christianity*.

There is a pretended great humiliation, being dead to the law, and emptied of self, which is one of the most elated things in the

* "Take not every opinion and doctrine from men or angels, that bears a fair shew of advancing Christ; for they may be but the fruits of evangelical hypocrisy and deceit; that being deceived themselves, may deceive others too; Matt. vii 15. 'Beware of them that come in sheep's clothing;' in the innocency, purity, and meekness of Christ and his people; 'but inwardly are wolves, proud, cruel, censorious, speaking evil of what they know not. By their fruits ye shall know them.' Do not think, beloved, that Satan will not seek to send delusions among us. And do you think these delusions will come out of the Popish pack, whose inventions smell above ground here? No, he must come, and will come with more evangelical fine-spun devices. It is a rule observed amongst Jesuits, to this day, if they would conquer religion by subtlety, never oppose religion with a cross religion; but set it against itself. So oppose the gospel by the gospel. And look, as churches pleading for works, had new invented devised works; so when faith is preached, men will have their new inventions of faith. I speak not this against the doctrine of faith, where it is preached; but am glad of it; not that I would have men content themselves with every form of faith; for I believe that most men's faith needs confirming or trying. But I speak to prevent danger on that hand." (Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 122.)

world. Some there are, who have made great profession of experience of a thorough work of the law on their own hearts, and of being brought fully off from works whose conversation has savoured most of a self-righteous spirit, of any that ever I had opportunity to observe. Some, who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, confident that they are abased in the dust, are full as they can hold with the glory of their own humility, and lifted up to heaven with an high opinion of their abasement. Their humility is a swelling, self-conceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming humility. It seems to be the nature of spiritual pride to make men conceited and ostentatious of their humility. This appears in that first-born of pride, among the children of men, that would be called *his holiness*, even the man of sin, that exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped; he styles himself *servant of servants;* and to make a shew of humility, washes the feet of a number of poor men at his inauguration.

For persons to be truly emptied of themselves, poor in spirit, and broken in heart, is quite another thing, and has other effects, than many imagine. It is astonishing how greatly many are deceived about themselves as to this matter, imagining themselves most humble, when they are most proud, and their behaviour is really the most haughty. The deceitfulness of the heart of man appears in no one thing so much, as this of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. The subtlety of Satan appears in its height, in his managing of persons with respect to this sin. And perhaps one reason may be, that here he has most experience: he knows the way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the secret springs of it; it was his own sin.—Experience gives vast advantage in leading souls, either to good or evil.

But though spiritual pride be so subtle and secret an iniquity, and commonly appears under a pretext of great humility; yet there are two things by which it may (perhaps universally and surely) be discovered and distinguished.

The *first* is this; he that is under the prevalence of this distemper, is apt to think highly of his attainments in religion, as comparing himself with others. It is natural for him to fall into that thought of himself, that he is an eminent saint, that he is very high amongst the saints, and has distinguishingly good and great experiences. That is the secret language of his heart, Luke xxviii. 11. *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men.* And Is. lxv. 5. *I am holier than thou.* Hence such are apt to put themselves forward among God's people, and as it were to take a high seat among them, as if there was no doubt of it but it belonged to them. They, as it were, naturally do that which Christ condemns, Luke xiv. 7. &c. *take the highest room.* This they do, by being forward to take upon them the place and bu[illegible]s of the

chief; to guide, teach, direct and manage; *They are confident that they are guides to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes,* Rom. ii. 19, 20. It is natural for them to take it for granted, that it belongs to them to do the part of dictators and masters in matters of religion; and so they implicitly affect to be called of men, Rabbi, which is by interpretation Master, as the Pharisees did, Matth. xxiii. 6, 7. i. e. they are apt to expect that others should regard them, and yield to them, as masters, in matters of religion*.

But he whose heart is under the power of Christian humility, is of a contrary disposition. If the scriptures are at all to be relied on, such an one is apt to think his attainments in religion to be comparatively mean, and to esteem himself low among the saints, and one of the least of saints. Humility, or true lowliness of mind, disposes persons to think others better than themselves; Phil. ii. 3. *In the lowness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.* Hence they are apt to think the lowest room belongs to them; and their inward disposition naturally leads them to obey that precept of our Saviour, Luke xiv. 10. It is not natural to them to take it upon them to do the part of teachers; but on the contrary, they are disposed to think that they are not the persons, that others are fitter for it than they; as it was with Moses and Jeremiah, (Exod. iii. 11. Jer. i. 6.) though they were such eminent saints, and of great knowledge. It is not natural to them to think that it belongs to them to teach, but to be taught: they are much more eager to hear, and to receive instruction from others, than to dictate; Jam. i. 19. *Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak.* And when they do speak, it is not natural to them to speak with a bold, masterly air; but humility disposes them rather to speak, trembling. Hos. xiii. 1. *When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.* They are not apt to assume authority, and to take upon them to be chief managers and masters; but rather to be subject to others; Jam. iii. 1, 2. *Be not many masters.* 1 Pet. v. 5. *All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.* Eph. v. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

Some persons' experiences naturally make them think highly of their experiences; and they often speak of them as very great and extraordinary; they freely speak of the *great things they have met with.* This *may* be spoken and meant in a *good* sense. In one sense, every degree of saving mercy is a *great thing:* it

* "There be two things wherein it appears that a man has only common gifts, and no inward principle; 1. These gifts ever puff up, and make a man something in his own eyes, as the Corinthian knowledge did; and many a private man thinks himself fit to be a minister." (Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 181, 182.)

is indeed a thing *great*, yea, *infinitely great*, for God to bestow the least crumb of children's bread on such dogs as we are in ourselves; and the more humble a person is that hopes God has bestowed such mercy on him, the more apt will he be to call it a *great thing that he has met with*, in this sense. But if by *great things which they have experienced*, they mean comparatively great spiritual experiences, or great compared with others' experiences, or beyond what is ordinary, which is evidently oftentimes the case; then for a person to say, *I have met with great things*, is the very same thing as to say, *I am an eminent saint*, and have more grace than ordinary. To have great experiences, if the experiences be true and worth telling, is the same thing as to have great grace: there is no true experience, but the exercise of grace; and exactly according to the degree of true experience, is the degree of grace and holiness. The persons that talk thus about their experiences, when they give an account of them, expect that others should admire them. Indeed they do not call it *boasting* to talk after this manner about their experiences, nor do they look upon it as any sign of pride; because they say, *they know that it was not they that did it, it was free grace, they are the great things that God has done for them, they would acknowledge the great mercy God has shown them, and not make light of it.* But so it was with the Pharisee, Luke xviii. He in words gave God the glory of making him to differ from other men; *God, I thank thee*, says he, *that I am not as other men**. Their verbally ascribing it to the grace of God, that they are holier than other saints, does not hinder their forwardness to think so highly of their holiness, being a sure evidence of the pride and vanity of their minds. If they were under the influence of an humble spirit, their attainments in religion would not be so apt to shine in their own eyes, nor would they be so much in admiring their own beauty. The Christians that are really the most eminent saints, and therefore have the most excellent experiences, *and are greatest in the kingdom of heaven, humble themselves as a little child*, Matth. xviii. 4. because they look on themselves as but little children in grace, and their attainments to be but the attainments of babes in Christ. They are astonished at, and ashamed of the low degrees of their love, their thankfulness, and their little knowledge of God. Moses, when he had been conversing with God in the mount, and his face shone so bright in the eyes of others as to dazzle their eyes, *wist not that his face shone.* Some persons go by the *name* of high

* Calvin in his Institutions, B. III. chap. xii. § 7. speaking of this Pharisee, observes, "That in his outward confession, he acknowledges that the righteousness that he has is the gift of God: but (says he) because he trusts *that he is righteous*, he goes away out of the presence of God, unacceptable and odious."

professors, and some will *own* themselves to be high professors; but eminently humble saints that will shine brightest in heaven, are not at all apt to profess high. I do not believe that there is an eminent saint in the world that is a high professor. Such will be much more likely to profess themselves to be the least of all saints, and to think that every saint's attainments and experiences are higher than his†.

Such is the nature of grace, and of true spiritual light, that they naturally dispose the saints in the present state, to look upon their grace and goodness little, and their deformity great. And they that have the most grace and spiritual light, of any in this world, have most of this disposition. This will appear most clear and evident to any one that soberly and thoroughly weighs the nature and reason of things, and considers the things following.

That grace and holiness is worthy to be called *little*, which is little in *comparison* of what it ought to be; and so it seems to one that is truly gracious. Such an one has his eye upon the rule of his duty; a conformity to that is what he aims at; it is what his soul reaches after; and it is by that he estimates and judges of what he does, and what he has. To a gracious soul, and especially to one eminently gracious, *that* holiness appears little, which is little compared with what it should be; little in comparison of that for which he sees infinite reason and obligation. If his holiness appears to him to be at a vast distance from this, it naturally appears despicable in his eyes, and not worthy to be mentioned as any beauty or amiableness in him. For the like reason as a hungry man naturally accounts that which is set before him, but a little food, a small matter, not worth mentioning, in comparison of his appetite. Or as the child of a great prince, who is jealous for the honour of his father, and beholds the respect which men shew him, naturally looks on that honour and respect very little, and not worthy to be regarded, which is

† Luther, as his words are cited by Rutherford, in his *Display of the spiritual Antichrist*, p. 143, 144, says thus, "So is the life of a Christian, that he that has begun, seems to himself to have nothing; but strives and presses forward, that he may apprehend. Whence Paul says, *I count not myself to have apprehended*. For indeed nothing is more pernicious to a believer, than that presumption, that he has already apprehended, and has no further need of seeking. Hence also many fall back, and pine away in spiritual security and slothfulness. So Bernard says. *To stand still in God's way, is to go back*. Wherefore this remains to him that has begun to be a Christian, to think that he is not yet a Christian, but to seek that he may be a Christian, that he may glory with Paul, *I am not, but I desire to be*; a Christian not yet finished, but only in his beginnings. Therefore he is not a Christian; that is, he that thinks himself a finished Christian, and is not sensible how he falls short. We reach after heaven, but are not in heaven. Wo to him that is wholly renewed, that is, that thinks himself to be so. That man without doubt, has never so much as begun to be renewed, nor did he ever taste what it is to be a Christian."

nothing in comparison of that which the dignity of his father requires.

The nature of true grace and spiritual light, opens to a person's view the infinite reason there is that he should be holy in a high degree. The more grace he has, the greater sense he has of the infinite excellency and glory of the divine Being, the infinite dignity of the person of Christ, and the boundless length and breadth, and depth and height, of the love of Christ to sinners. And as grace increases, the field opens more and more to a distant view, until the soul is swallowed up with the vastness of the object; the person is astonished to think how much it becomes him to love this God, and this glorious Redeemer who has so loved man, and how little he does love. And so the more he apprehends, the more the smallness of his grace and love appears strange and wonderful: and therefore is more ready to think that others are beyond him. Wondering at the littleness of his own grace, he can scarcely believe that so strange a thing happens to other saints. It is amazing to him, that one who is really a child of God, and who has actually received the saving benefits of the unspeakable love of Christ, should love no more. He is apt to look upon it as a thing peculiar to himself, a strange instance; for he sees only the outside of other Christians, but he sees his own inside.

Here the reader may possibly object, that love to God is really increased in proportion as the knowledge of God is increased; and therefore how should an increase of knowledge in a saint, make his love appear less, in comparison of what is known? To which I answer, that although the love of God in the saints, be answerable to the degree of knowledge or sight of God, yet it is not in proportion to the object seen and known. The soul of a saint, by having something of God opened to sight, is convinced of much more than is seen. There is something seen, that is wonderful; and that sight brings with it a strong conviction of something vastly beyond, that is not immediately seen. So that the soul, at the same time, is astonished at its ignorance, and that it knows so little, as well as that it loves so little. And as the soul, in a spiritual view, is convinced of infinitely more in the object, yet beyond sight; so it is convinced of the capacity of the soul, of knowing vastly more, if clouds and darkness were but removed. Which causes the soul, in the enjoyment of a spiritual view, to complain greatly of spiritual ignorance and want of love, and long after more knowledge, and more love.

The true love of God in the most eminent saints in this world, is truly very little in comparison of what it ought to be. Because the highest love that ever any attain to in this life, is poor, cold, exceeding low, and not worthy to be named in comparison of

what our obligations appear to be, from the joint consideration of these two things; viz. 1. The reason God has given us to love him, in the manifestations he has made of his infinite glory, in his word and works, and particularly in the gospel of his Son, and what he has done for sinful man by him. And, 2. The capacity there is in the soul of man, by those intellectual faculties which God has given it, of seeing and understanding these reasons, which God has given us to love him. How small indeed is the love of the most eminent saint on earth, in comparison of what these things jointly considered do require! And of this, grace tends to convince men; and especially eminent grace: for grace is of the nature of light, and brings truth to view. And therefore he that has much grace, apprehends much more than others, that great height to which his love ought to ascend; and he sees better than others, how little a way he has risen towards that height. And therefore, estimating his love by the whole height of his duty, hence it appears astonishingly little and low in his eyes.

And the eminent saint, having such a conviction of the high degree in which he ought to love God, is shewn, not only the littleness of his grace, but the greatness of his remaining corruption. In order to judge how much corruption or sin we have remaining in us, we must take our measure from that height to which the rule of our duty extends. The whole of the distance we are at from that height, is sin: for failing of duty is sin; otherwise our duty is not our duty; and by how much the more we fall short of our duty, so much the more sin have we. Sin is no other than disagreeableness, in a moral agent, to the law, or rule of his duty. And therefore the degree of sin is to be judged of by the rule: so much disagreeableness to the rule, so much sin, whether it be in *defect* or *excess*. Therefore if men, in their love to God, do not come up half way to that height which duty requires, then they have more corruption in their hearts than grace; because there is more goodness wanting than is there; and all that is wanting is sin. Sin is an abominable defect; and appears so to the saints, especially those that are eminent; it appears exceeding abominable to them, that Christ should be loved so little, and thanked so little for his dying love; it is in their eyes hateful ingratitude.

And then the increase of grace has a tendency another way, to cause the saints to think their deformity vastly more than their goodness. It not only tends to convince them that their corruption is much greater than their goodness, which is indeed the case; but it also tends to cause the deformity that there is in the least sin, or the least degree of corruption, to appear so great, as vastly to outweigh all the beauty there is in their greatest holi-

ness; for this also is indeed the case. For the least sin against an infinite God, has an infinite hatefulness or deformity in it; but the highest degree of holiness in a creature, has not an infinite loveliness in it: and therefore the loveliness of it is as nothing, in comparison of the deformity of the least sin. That every sin has infinite deformity and hatefulness in it, is most demonstrably evident; because what the evil, or iniquity, or hatefulness of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, or the being or doing contrary to what we should be or do, or are obliged to. And therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, so much the greater is the iniquity and hatefulness of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love and honour any being, is in some proportion to his loveliness and honourableness, or to his worthiness to be loved and honoured by us; which is the same thing. We are surely under greater obligation to love a more lovely being, than a less lovely: and if a Being be infinitely lovely or worthy to be loved by us, then our obligations to love him, are infinitely great: and therefore, whatever is contrary to this love, has in it infinite iniquity, deformity, and unworthiness. But on the other hand, with respect to our holiness or love to God, there is not an infinite worthiness in that. The sin of the creature against God, is ill-deserving and hateful in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature: the greatness of the object, and the meanness and inferiority of the subject, aggravate it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the creature to God; it is *worthless*, and not worthy, in proportion to the meanness of the subject. So much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The great degreee of superiority increases the obligation on the inferior to regard the superior; and so makes the want of regard more hateful: but the great degree of inferiority diminishes the worth of the regard of the inferior; because the more he is inferior—the less is he worthy of notice; the less he is—the less is what he can offer worth; for he can offer no more than himself, in offering his best respect; and therefore as he is little, and little worth, so is his respect little worth. And the more a person has of true grace and spiritual light, the more will it appear thus to him; the more will he appear to himself infinitely deformed by reason of sin, and the less will the goodness that is in his grace, or good experience, appear in proportion to it. For indeed it is nothing to it; it is less than a drop to the ocean; for finite bears no proportion at all to that which is infinite. But the more a person has of spiritual light, the more do things appear to him, in this respect, as they are indeed. Hence it most demonstrably appears, that true grace

is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, with remaining corruption, the less does his goodness and holiness appear, in proportion to his deformity; and not only to his past, but to his present deformity, in the sin that now appears in his heart, and in the abominable defects of his highest and best affections, and brightest experiences.

The nature of many high religious affections, and great discoveries (as they are called) in many persons I have been acquainted with, is to hide the corruption of their hearts, and to make it seem to them as if all their sin was gone, and to leave them without complaints of any hateful evil left in them, (though it may be they cry out much of their past unworthiness); a sure and certain evidence that their discoveries are darkness and not light. It is darkness that hides men's pollution and deformity; but light let into the heart discovers it, searches it out in its secret corners, and makes it plainly to appear; especially that penetrating, all-searching light of God's holiness and glory. It is true, that saving discoveries may for the present hide corruption in one sense; they restrain the *positive exercises* of it; such as malice, envy, covetousness, lasciviousness, murmuring, &c. but they bring corruption to light, in that which is *privative*, viz. that there is no more love, no more humility, nor more thankfulness. Which defects appear most hateful, in the eyes of those who have the most eminent exercises of grace; and are very burdensome, and cause the saints to complain of their leanness, odious pride and ingratitude. And whatever positive exercises of corruption at any time arise, and mingle themselves with eminent actings of grace, grace will exceedingly magnify the view of them, and render their appearance far more heinous and horrible.

The more eminent saints are, and the more they have of the light *of heaven* in their souls, the more do they appear to *themselves*, as the most eminent saints in this world do to the saints and *angels in heaven*. How can we rationally suppose the most eminent saints on earth appear to them, if beheld any otherwise than covered with the righteousness of Christ, and their deformities swallowed up and hid in the coruscation of the beams of his abundant glory and love? how can we suppose our most ardent love and praises appear to them, who behold the beauty and glory of God without a veil? how does our highest thankfulness for the dying love of Christ appear to them, who see Christ as he is, who know as they are known, and see the glory of the person of him that died, and the wonders of his dying love, without cloud or darkness? and how do they look on the deepest reverence and humility, with which worms of the dust on earth approach that infinite Majesty, which they behold? do they appear *great* to them, or so much as worthy of the name of rever-

ence and humility, in those whom they behold at such an infinite distance from that great and holy God, in whose glorious presence they are? The reason why the *highest* attainments of the saints on earth appear so mean to them, is that they dwell in the light of God's glory, and *see him as he is.* And it is in this respect with the saints on earth, as it is with those in heaven, in proportion as they are more eminent in grace.

I would not be understood, that the saints on earth have, in all respects, the worst opinion of themselves, when they have most of the exercise of grace. In many respects it is otherwise. With respect to the *positive exercises* of corruption, they may appear to themselves freest and best when grace is most in exercise, and worst when the actings of grace are lowest. And when they compare themselves with themselves, at different times they may know, when grace is in lively exercise, that it is better with them than it was before, (though before, at the time, they did not see so much evil as they see now); and when afterwards they sink again in the frame of their minds, they may *know* that they sink, and have a new argument of their great remaining corruption, and a *rational* conviction of a greater vileness than they saw before; and may have a sense of guilt, and a *legal* sense of their sinfulness, far greater than when in the lively exercise of grace. But yet it is true, and demonstrable from the forementioned considerations, that the children of God never have such a *sensible* and *spiritual* conviction of their deformity, and so great, quick, and abasing sense of their present vileness and odiousness, as when they are highest in the exercise of true grace; and never are they so much disposed to set themselves low among Christians as then. And thus *he that is the greatest in the kingdom*, or most eminent in the church of Christ, is he *that humbles himself*, as the least infant among them; Matt. xviii. 4.

A true saint may know that he has some true grace: and the more grace there is, the more easily is it known; as was observed and proved before. But yet it does not follow, that an *eminent* saint is *easily sensible* that he is an eminent saint, when compared with others.—I will not deny that it is possible, that he who has much grace, and is an eminent saint, may know it. But he will not be *apt* to know it; it will not be *obvious* to him. That he is better than others, and has higher experiences and attainments, is not a *foremost* thought, nor does it readily offer itself. It is not in his way, but lies far out of sight; he must take pains to convince himself of it; there will be need of a great command of reason, and a high degree of strictness and care in arguing, to convince himself. And if he be rationally convinced, by a very strict consideration of his own experiences, compared with the great appearances of low degrees of grace in some other saints,

it will hardly seem real to him, that he has more grace than they. He will be apt even to lose the conviction he has by pains obtained; nor will it seem at all natural to him to act upon that supposition. And this may be laid down as an infallible thing. *That the person who is apt to think that he, as compared with others, is a very eminent saint, much distinguished in Christian experience, in whom this is a first thought, that rises of itself, and naturally offers itself; he is certainly mistaken; he is no eminent saint; but under the great prevailings of a proud and self-righteous spirit.* And if this be *habitual* with the man, and is statedly the prevailing temper of his mind, he is no saint at all; he has not the least degree of any true Christian experience; so surely as the word of God is true.

Experiences of that tendency, and found to have this effect, viz. to elevate the subject of them with a great conceit of those experiences, are certainly vain and delusive. Those supposed discoveries that naturally blow up the person with an admiration of the eminency of his discoveries, and fill him with conceit, that now he has seen, and knows more than most other Christians, have nothing of the nature of true spiritual light in them. All true spiritual knowledge is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, the more is he sensible of his own ignorance; 1 Cor. viii. 2. *He that thinketh he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* Agur, when he had a great discovery of God, the wonderful height of his glory and his marvellous works, acknowledging his greatness and incomprehensibleness, had, at the same time, the deepest sense of his brutish ignorance. He looked upon himself as the *most ignorant* of all the saints; Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 4. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth?* what is his name, *and what is his Son's name,* if thou canst tell?

For a man to be *highly conceited* of his spiritual knowledge, is for him to be *wise in his own eyes,* if any thing is. And therefore it comes under those prohibitions, Prov. iii. 7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes:* Rom. xii. 16. *Be not wise in your own conceits:* and brings men under that wo, Is. v. 21. *Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.* Those who are *thus* wise, are some of the least likely to get good of any in the world. Experience shews this truth, Prov. xxvi. 12. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

To this some may object, that the Psalmist, when we must suppose that he was in a holy frame, speaks of his knowledge as eminently great, and far greater than that of other saints, Psal. cxix. 99, 100. *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.* To this I answer two things:

(1.) There is no restraint to be laid upon the Spirit of God, as to what he shall reveal to a prophet, for the benefit of his church, who is speaking or writing under *immediate inspiration.* The Spirit of God may reveal to such an one, and dictate to him to declare to others, secret things, that otherwise would be hard, yea impossible for him to find out. As he may reveal to him mysteries, which otherwise would be above his reason; or things in a distant place, that he cannot see; or future events, which it would be impossible for him to know and declare, if they were not extraordinarily revealed to him: so the Spirit of God might reveal to David this distinguishing benefit, which he had received by conversing much with God's testimonies; and use him as his instrument to record it for the benefit of others, to excite them to the like duty, and to use the same means to gain knowledge.—Nothing can be gathered concerning the natural tendency of the *ordinary* gracious influences of the Spirit of God, from what David declares of his distinguishing knowledge under the *extraordinary* influences of God's Spirit, immediately dictating to him what he pleased for the benefit of his church; any more than we can reasonably argue, that it is the natural tendency of grace to incline men to wish the most dreadful misery to others, because David under inspiration, often prays that such misery may come upon them.

(2.) It is not certain that the knowledge David here speaks of, is *spiritual* knowledge, wherein holiness fundamentally consists. But it may be that greater *revelation* which God made to him of the Messiah and his future kingdom, and the far more clear and extensive knowledge of the mysteries and doctrines of the gospel, than others; as a reward for his keeping God's testimonies. In this, it is apparent by the book of Psalms, that David far exceeded all who had gone before him.

Secondly, Another infallible sign of spiritual pride, is persons being apt to think highly of their humility. False experiences are commonly attended with a counterfeit humility. And it is the very nature of a counterfeit humility, to be highly conceited of itself. False religious affections have generally a tendency, especially when raised to a great height, to make persons think that their humility is great, and accordingly to take much notice of their great attainments in this respect, and admire them. But

eminently gracious affections (I scruple not to say it) are evermore of a contrary tendency, and have universally a contrary effect. They indeed make their possessors very sensible that they should be deeply humbled, and cause them earnestly to thirst and long after it; but they make their present humility, or that which they have already attained, to appear small, and their remaining pride great, and exceedingly abominable.

The reason why a proud person is apt to think his humility great, and a very humble person his humility small, may be easily seen, if it be considered, that it is natural for persons, in judging of the degree of their own humiliation, to take their measure from that which they esteem their proper height, or the dignity wherein they properly stand. That may be great humiliation in one, which is no humiliation at all in another; because the degree of honourableness or considerableness, wherein each properly stands is very different. For some great man to stoop to loose the latchet of the shoes of another great man, his equal, or to wash his feet, would be taken notice of as an act of great abasement in him; and he being sensible of his own dignity, would look upon it so himself. But if a poor slave is seen stooping to unloose the shoes of a great prince, nobody will take notice of this, as an act of humiliation in him, or token of any great degree of humility; nor would the slave himself, unless he be horribly proud, and ridiculously conceited: and if after he had done it, he should, in his talk and behaviour, shew that he thought his abasement *great* in it, and had his mind much upon it, as an evidence of his being very humble, would not every body cry out, "Who do you think yourself to be, that you should think this a mark of deep humiliation?" This would make it plain to a demonstration, that the slave was swollen with a high degree of pride and vanity of mind, as much as if he declared in plain terms, *I think myself to be some great one*. And the matter is no less plain and certain, when worthless, vile, and loathsome worms of the dust, are apt to put such a construction on their acts of abasement before God, and to think it a token of great humility in them, that they acknowledge themselves to be mean and unworthy, and behave themselves as those who are so inferior.—The very reason why such outward acts, and such inward exercises, look like great abasement in such a person is, that he has a high conceit of himself. Whereas if he thought of himself more justly, these things would appear nothing to him, and his humility in them worthy of no regard; but he would rather be astonished at his pride, that one so infinitely despicable and vile, is brought no lower before God. When he says in his heart, "This is a great act of humiliation; it is certainly a sign of great

humility in me, that I should feel thus, and do so:" his meaning is, "This is great humility for me, for such a one as I, who am so considerable and worthy." He considers how low he is now brought, and compares this with the height of dignity, on which he thinks he stands, and the distance appears very great; he calls it *humility*, and as such admires it. Whereas, in him who is truly humble, and really sees his own vileness and loathsomeness before God, the distance appears the other way. When he is brought lowest of all, it does not appear to him that he is brought below his proper station, but that he is not come to it; he appears to himself, yet vastly above it; he longs to get lower, that he may come to it; but appears at a great distance from it. And this distance he calls pride. And therefore his pride appears great to him, and not his humility. For although he is brought much lower than he used to be, yet it does not appear to him worthy of the name of humiliation, for him that is so infinitely mean and detestable, to come down to a place, which though it be lower than what he used to assume, is yet vastly higher than what is proper for him. Men would hardly count it worthy of the name of humility, in a contemptible slave, that formerly affected to be a prince, to have his spirit so far brought down, as to take the place of a nobleman, when this is still so far above his proper station.

All men, in judging of the degree of their own and others' humility, as appearing in any act of theirs, consider two things; viz. the real degree of dignity they stand in; and the degree of abasement, with the relation it bears to that real dignity. Thus, what may be an evidence of great humility in one, evidences but little or no humility in another. But truly humble Christians have so mean an opinion of their own real dignity, that all their self-abasement, when considered with relation to, and compared with that, appears very small to them. It does not seem to them to be any great humility, for such poor, vile, abject creatures as they are, to lie at the foot of God.

The degree of humility is to be judged of by the degree of *abasement*, and the degree of the *cause for abasement;* but he that is truly and eminently humble, never thinks his humility great. The cause why he should be abased appears so great, and the abasement of the frame of his heart so greatly short of it, that he takes much more notice of his pride than his humility.

Every one that has been conversant with souls under convictions of sin, knows that they are not apt to think themselves greatly convinced. And the reason is, men judge of the degree of their own convictions by two things jointly considered; viz. the degree of *sense* which they have of guilt and pollution, and the degree of *cause* they have for such a sense, in the degree of their

real sinfulness. It is really no argument of any *great* conviction of sin, for some men to think themselves sinful, beyond most others in the world; because they are so indeed, very plainly and notoriously: he must be very blind indeed not to be sensible of it. But he that is truly under great convictions of sin, naturally thinks, that the *cause* he has to be sensible of guilt and pollution, is greater than others have; and therefore he ascribes his sensibleness of this, to the greatness of his sin, and not to the greatness of his sensibility. It is natural for one under great convictions, to think himself one of the greatest of sinners. *That* man is under great convictions, whose conviction is great in proportion to his sin. But no man that is truly under great convictions, thinks his conviction great in proportion to his sin. For if he does, it is a certain sign that he inwardly thinks his sins small. And if that be the case, that is a certain evidence that his conviction is small. And this, by the way, is the main reason, that persons, when under a work of humiliation, are not sensible of it, in the time of it.

And as it is with conviction of sin, just so it is, by parity of reason, with respect to persons' conviction of their own meanness and vileness, their blindness, their impotence, and all that low sense a Christian has of himself, in the exercise of *evangelical humiliation*. So that in a high degree of this, the saints are never disposed to think their sense of their own meanness, filthiness, impotence, &c. to be great; because it never appears great to them, considering the cause.

An eminent saint is not apt to think himself eminent in any thing; all his graces and experiences appear to him to be comparatively small; but especially his humility. Nothing that appertains to Christian experience, and true piety, is so much out of his sight. He is a thousand times more quick-sighted to discern his pride, than his humility. On the contrary, the deluded hypocrite, who is under the power of spiritual pride, is so blind to nothing as his pride; and so quick-sighted to nothing, as the shews of humility.

The humble Christian is more apt to find fault with his own pride than with that of other men. He is apt to put the best construction on others' words and behaviour, and to think that none are so proud as himself. But the proud hypocrite is quick to discern the mote in his brother's eye, in this respect; while he sees nothing of the beam in his own. He is very often crying out of others' pride, finding fault with others' apparel, and way of living; and is affected ten times as much with his neighbour's ring or ribband, as with all the filthiness of his own heart.

From the disposition there is in hypocrites to think highly of their humility, it comes to pass that counterfeit humility is forward

to put forth itself to view. Those who have it, are apt to be much in speaking of their humiliations, setting them forth in high terms, and making a great outward shew of humility, in affected looks, gestures, manner of speech, meanness of apparel, or some affected singularity. So it was of old with the false prophets, Zech. xiii. 4, so it was with the hypocritical Jews, Is. lvii. 5. and so Christ tells us it was with the Pharisees, Matth. vi. 16. But it is contrariwise with true humility; they who have it, are not apt to display their eloquence in setting it forth, or to speak of the *degree* of their abasement in strong terms*. It does not affect to shew itself in any singular meanness either of apparel, or way of living; agreeable to what is implied in Matth. vi. 17. *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.* Col. ii. 23. *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body.* Nor is true humility a *noisy* thing; it is not loud and boisterous. The scripture represents it as of a contrary nature. Ahab, when he had a visible humility, a resemblance of true humility, *went softly*, 1 Kings, xxi. 27. A penitent, in the exercise of true humiliation, is represented as still and *silent*, Lam. iii. 28. *He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.* And silence is mentioned as what attends humility; Prov. xxx. 32. *If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.*

Thus I have particularly and largely shewn the nature of that true humility which attends holy affections, as it appears in its tendency to cause persons to think meanly of their attainments in religion, compared with the attainments of others, and particularly, of their attainments in humility: and have shewn the contrary tendency of spiritual pride, to dispose persons to think their attainments in these respects to be great. I have insisted the longer on this, because I think it a matter of great importance, as it affords a certain distinction between true and counterfeit humility; and also as this disposition of hypocrites—whereby they look on themselves as better than others—is what God has declared to be very hateful to him, *a smoke in his nose, and a fire that burneth all the day*, Is. lxv. 5. It is mentioned as an instance of pride in the inhabitants of that holy city (as it was called) Jerusalem, that they esteemed themselves far better than the people

* It is an observation of Mr. Jones, in his excellent treatise of the canon of the New Testament, that the evangelist Mark—who was the companion of St. Peter, and is supposed to have written his gospel under the direction of that apostle—when he mentions Peter's repentance after his denying his Master, does not use such strong terms to set it forth as the other evangelists; he only uses these words, *When he thought thereon, he wept*, Mark xiv. 72; whereas the other evangelists say thus, *He went out, and wept bitterly*, Matth. xxvi. 75. Luke xxii. 62.

of Sodom; Ezek. xvi. 36. *For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride.*

Let not the reader slightly pass over these things in application to himself. When you imagine, reader, that it is a bad sign for a person to be apt to think himself a better saint than others, take heed lest there arise a blinding prejudice in your own favour. There will probably be need of great strictness of self-examination, in order to determine whether it be so with you. If you conclude thus, *It seems to me, none are so bad as I.* Do not let the matter pass off so; but examine again, whether or no you do not think yourself better than others on this very account, because you imagine you think so meanly of yourself. Have not you a high opinion of this humility? If you answer, *No; I have not a high opinion of my humility; it seems to me I am as proud as the devil:* examine again, whether self-conceit do not rise up under this cover; whether on this very account—that you think yourself as proud as the devil—you do not think yourself to be very humble.

From this opposition between the nature of a true, and of a counterfeit humility, as to the esteem that the subjects of them have of themselves, arises a manifold contrariety of temper and behaviour. A truly humble person, having such a mean opinion of his righteousness and holiness, is *poor* in *spirit.* For a person to be poor in spirit, is to be in his own sense and apprehension poor, as to what is in him, and to be of an answerable disposition. Therefore a truly humble person, especially one eminently humble, naturally behaves himself in many respects as a poor man. *The poor useth entreaties, but the rich answereth roughly.* A poor man is not disposed to quick and high resentment when he is among the rich. He is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are above him; nor is he stiff and self-willed. He is patient with hard fare, expects no other than to be despised, and takes it patiently. He does not take it heinously that he is overlooked, and but little regarded; but is prepared to be in a low place; readily honours his superiors, and takes reproofs quietly. He easily yields to be taught, and does not claim much to his understanding and judgment; he is not over nice or humoursome, and has his spirit subdued to hard things; he is not assuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but it is natural for him to be subject to others. Thus it is with the humble Christian. Humility is (as the great MASTRICHT expresses it) *a kind of holy pusillanimity.* A man that is very poor is a beggar; so is he that is poor in spirit. This constitutes a great difference between those affections that are gracious, and those that are false: under the former, the person continues still a poor beggar

at God's gates, exceeding empty and needy; but the latter make men appear to themselves rich, and increased with goods, and not very necessitous; they have a great stock in their own imagination for their subsistence*.

A poor man is modest in his speech and behaviour; much more, and more certainly and universally, is one that is poor in spirit, humble and modest in his behaviour amongst men. It is in vain for any to pretend that they are humble, and as little children before God, when they are haughty, assuming, and impudent in their behaviour amongst men. The apostle informs us, that the design of the gospel is to cut off all glorying, not only before God, but also before men, Rom. iv. 1, 2. Some pretend to great humiliation, while yet they are very haughty, audacious and assuming in their external appearance and behaviour: but they ought to consider those scriptures, Psal. cxxxi. 1. *Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.* Prov. vi. 16, 17. *These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, &c.*—Chap. xxi. 4. *An high look, and a proud heart, are sin.* Psal. xviii. 27. *Thou wilt bring down high looks.* And Psal. ci. 5. *Him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, I will not suffer.* 1 Cor. xiii. 4. *Charity vaunteth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly.* There is a certain amiable modesty and fear that belongs to a Christian behaviour among men, arising from humility, of which the scripture often speaks; 1 Pet. iii. 15. *Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you, with meekness and fear.* Rom. xiii. 7. *Fear to whom fear.* 2 Cor. vii. 15. *Whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.* Eph. vi. 5. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling.* 1 Pet. ii. 18. *Servants,*

* "This spirit ever keeps a man poor and vile in his own eyes, and empty.—When the man hath got some knowledge, and can discourse pretty well, and hath some tastes of the heavenly gift, some sweet illapses of grace, and so his conscience is pretty well quieted: and if he hath got some answer to his prayers, and hath sweet affections, he grows full: and having ease to his conscience, casts off sense, and daily groaning under sin. And hence the spirit of prayer dies: he loses his esteem of God's ordinances; feels not such need of them; or gets no good, feels no life or power by them. This is the woful condition of some; but yet they know it not. But now he that is filled with the Spirit, the Lord empties him; and the more, the longer he lives. So that though others think he needs not much grace; yet he accounts himself the poorest." (Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins, Part II. p. 132.)

"After all fillings, be ever empty, hungry, and feeling need, and praying for more." (Ibid. p. 151.)

"Truly, brethren, when I see the curse of God upon many Christians, that are now grown full of their parts, gifts, peace, comforts, abilities, duties, I stand adoring the riches of the Lord's mercy, to a little handful of poor believers; not only in making them empty, but in keeping them so all their days." (Shepard's Sound Believer, the [illegible] Boston, p. 158, 159.)

be subject to your masters with all fear. 1 Pet. iii. 2. *While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.* 1 Tim. ii. 9. *That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.* In this respect a Christian is like a little child; a little child is modest before men, and his heart is apt to be possessed with fear and awe amongst them.

The same spirit will dispose a Christian to honour all men; 1 Pet. ii. 17. *Honour all men.* A humble Christian is not only disposed to honour the saints in his behaviour; but others also, in all those ways that do not imply a visible approbation of their sins. Thus Abraham, the great pattern of believers, honoured the children of Heth; Gen. xxiii. 11, 12. *Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land.* This was a remarkable instance of a humble behaviour towards them whom Abraham knew to be accursed; for which cause he would by no means suffer his servant to take a wife to his son, from among them; and for which cause also Esau's wives, being of these children of Heth, were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. So Paul honoured Festus, Acts xxvi. 24. *I am not mad, most noble Festus.* Not only will Christian humility dispose persons to honour wicked men out of the visible church, but also false brethren and persecutors. Jacob, when he was in an excellent frame—having just been wrestling all night with God, and received the blessing—honoured Esau, his false and persecuting brother: Gen. xxxi. 3. *Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother Esau.* So he called him *lord:* and commanded all his family to honour him in like manner.

Thus I have endeavoured to describe the heart and behaviour of one who is governed by a truly gracious humility, as exactly agreeable to the scriptures as I am able. Now, it is out of such a heart as this, that all truly holy affections flow. Christian affections are like Mary's precious ointment poured on Christ's head, that filled the whole house with a sweet odour. *That* was poured out of an *alabaster box;* so gracious affections flow out to Christ out of a *pure heart.* That was poured out of a *broken box,* (until the box was broken, the ointment could not flow, nor diffuse its odour) so gracious affections flow out of a *broken heart.* Gracious affections are also like those of Mary Magdalene, (Luke vii. at the latter end) who in like manner pours precious ointment on Christ, out of an alabaster broken box, anointing therewith the feet of Jesus, when she had washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. All gracious affections, which are a sweet odour to Christ, filling the soul of a Christian with an heavenly sweetness and fragrancy, are broken-hearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken-hearted love. The desires of the saints, how-

ever earnest, are humble desires; their hope is an humble hope; and their joy, even when it is *unspeakable and full of glory*, is a humble, broken-hearted joy, leaving the Christian more poor in spirit, more like a little child, and more disposed to an univeasal lowliness of behaviour.

SECT. VII.

Another thing, wherein gracious affections are distinguished from others, is, that they are attended with a change of nature.

All gracious affections arise from a spiritual understanding, in which the soul has the excellency and glory of divine things discovered to it, as was shewn before. But all spiritual discoveries are also transforming. They not only make an alteration of the present exercise, sensation and frame of the soul, but such is their power and efficacy, that they alter its very nature; 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Such power as this, is properly divine, and is peculiar to *the Spirit of the Lord.* Other power may make a great alteration in men's present frames and feelings, but it is the power of a Creator only that can change the nature. And no discoveries or illuminations, but those that are divine and supernatural, will have this supernatural effect. But this effect all those discoveries have, that are truly divine. The soul is deeply affected by these discoveries; so affected, as to be transformed.

Thus it is with those affections of which the soul is the subject in its conversion. The scriptural representations of conversion, strongly imply and signify a change of nature: such as *being born again; becoming new creatures; rising from the dead; being renewed in the spirit of the mind; dying to sin, and living to righteousness; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man; being ingrafted into a new stock; having a divine seed implanted in the heart; being made partakers of the divine nature, &c.*

Therefore if there be no great and remarkable abiding change in persons, who think they have experienced a work of conversion, vain are all their imaginations and pretences, however they may have been affected*. Conversion (if we may give any cre-

* I would not judge of the whole soul's coming to Christ, so much by sudden pangs, as by an inward bent. For the whole soul, in affectionate expressions and actions, may be carried to Christ; but being without this bent, and change of affections, is unsound." (Shepard's Parable, Part 1. p. 203.)

dit to the scripture) is a great and universal change of the man, turning him from sin to God. A man may be restrained from sin, before he is converted; but when he is converted, his very heart and nature is turned from it unto holiness: so that thenceforward he becomes a holy person, and an enemy to sin. If, therefore, after a person's high affections at his supposed first conversion, it happens that in a little time there is no very remarkable alteration in him, as to those bad qualities and evil habits which before were visible in him—and he is ordinarily under the prevalence of the same kind of dispositions as heretofore, and the same things seem to belong to his character, he appearing as selfish, carnal, stupid, and perverse, unchristian, and unsavoury as ever—it is greater evidence against him, than the brightest story of experiences that ever was told can be for him. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, neither high profession, nor low profession, neither a fair story, nor a broken one, avails any thing, but a new creature. If there be a very great alteration visible in a person for a while, yet if it be not abiding, but he afterwards return, in a stated manner, to his former habits, it appears to be no change of nature; for nature is an abiding thing. A swine may be washed, but the swinish nature remains; a dove may be defiled, but its cleanly nature remains*.

Allowances, indeed, must be made for the natural temper, which conversion does not entirely eradicate: those sins which a man by his natural constitution was most inclined to before his conversion, he may be most apt to fall into still. But yet conversion will make a great alteration even with respect to these sins.—Though grace, while imperfect, does not root out an evil natural temper, yet it is of great power and efficacy to correct it. The change wrought in conversion, is an universal change: grace changes a man with respect to whatever is sinful in him; the *old man* is put off, and the *new man* put on; he is sanctified throughout. He is become a new creature, old things are passed away, and *all things* are become new; all sin is mortified, constitutional sins, as well as others. If a man before his conversion was, by his natural constitution, prone to lasciviousness, or drunkenness, or maliciousness, converting grace will make a great alteration in him, with respect to these evil dispositions; so that however he may be still most in danger of these sins, they shall no longer

* "It is with the soul, as with water; all the cold may be gone, but the native principle of cold remains still. You may remove the burning of lusts, not the blackness of nature. Where the power of sin lies, change of conscience from security to terror, change of life from profaneness to civility, and fashions of the world, to escape the pollutions thereof, change of lusts, nay quenching them for a time: but the nature is never changed, in the best hypocrite that ever was.—(Shepard' Parable, Part I. p. 194.)

have dominion over him; nor will they any more be properly his character. Yes, true repentance, in some respects especially, turns a man against his *own* iniquity; *that* wherein he has been most guilty, and has chiefly dishonoured God. He that forsakes other sins, but preserves the iniquity to which he is chiefly inclined, is like Saul, who, when sent against God's enemies the Amalekites, with a strict charge to save none of them alive, but utterly to destroy them, small and great, slew the people, but saved the king.

Some foolishly make it an argument in favour of their discoveries and affections, that when they are gone, they are left wholly without any life or sense, or any thing beyond what they had before. They think it an evidence that what they experienced was wholly of God, and not of themselves, because (say they) when God is departed, all is gone; they can see and feel nothing, and are no better than they used to be. It is very true, that all grace and goodness in the hearts of the saints is entirely from God; and they are universally and immediately dependent on him for it. But yet these persons are mistaken, as to the manner of God's communicating himself and his Holy Spirit, in imparting saving grace to the soul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the soul, and to dwell there *after the manner of a principle of nature:* so that the soul, in being endued with grace, is endued with a *new nature:* but nature is an *abiding* thing. All the exercises of grace are entirely from Christ: but are not from him as a living agent moves and stirs what is without life, and which yet remains lifeless. The soul has life communicated to it, so as through Christ's power to have inherent in itself a *vital nature.* In the soul where Christ savingly *is*, there he *lives.* He does not merely live *without* it, so as violently to actuate it, but he lives *in* it, so that the soul also is *alive.* Grace in the soul is as much from Christ, as the light in a glass, held out in the sun-beams, is from the sun. But this represents the manner of the communication of grace to the soul, but in part; because the glass remaining as it was, the *nature* of it not being at all changed, it is as much without any lightsomeness in its nature as ever. But the soul of a saint receives light from the sun of righteousness in such a manner, that its *nature* is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous thing. Not only does the sun shine in the saints, but they also become little suns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light. In this respect, the manner of their derivation of light, is like that of the lamps in the tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting glass; which though they were lit up by fire from heaven, yet thereby became themselves burning shining things. The saints do not only drink of the water of life, that flows from the original fountain, but this

water becomes a fountain of water in them, springing up there, and flowing out of them, John iv. 14. and chap. vii. 38, 39. Grace is compared to a seed implanted, that not only is *in* the ground, but has *hold* of it; has *root* there, *grows* there, and is an abiding *principle* of life and nature there.

As it is with spiritual discoveries and affections given at first conversion, so it is in all subsequent illuminations and affections of that kind, they are all *transforming*. There is a like divine power and energy in them, as in the first discoveries: and they still reach the bottom of the heart, and affect and alter the very nature of the soul, in proportion to the degree in which they are given. And a transformation of nature is continued and carried on by them, to the end of life, until it is brought to perfection in glory. Hence the progress of the work of grace in the hearts of the saints, is represented in scripture, as a continued conversion and renovation of nature. So the apostle exhorts those that were at Rome *beloved of God, called to be saints*—the subjects of God's redeeming *mercies*—to be *transformed by the renewing of their mind*, Rom. xii. 1, 2. *I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice;—and be not conformed to this world; but be ye* TRANSFORMED *by the renewing of your mind.* (Compared with chap. i. 7.) So the apostle, writing to the *saints and faithful in Christ Jesus*, who were at Ephesus, (Eph. i. 1.)—*who were once dead in trespasses and sins*, but now *quickened, raised up, made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works; who were once far off, but now made nigh by the blood of Christ: who were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; who were built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;*—tells them, *that he ceased not to pray for them, that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know*, or experience, *what was the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places*, Eph. i. 16. to the end. In this the apostle has respect to the glorious power and work of God in converting and renewing the soul; as is most plain by the sequel. So the apostle exhorts the same persons *to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of their minds: and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*, Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

There is a sort of high affections which leave persons without any appearance of an abiding effect. They go off suddenly; so

that from the height of their emotion, and seeming rapture, they pass at once to be quite dead, and void of all sense and activity. It surely is not wont to be thus with high gracious affections*; they leave a sweet savour and relish of divine things on the heart, and a stronger bent of soul towards God and holiness. As Moses' face not only shone while he was in the mount, extraordinarily conversing with God, but it continued to shine *after* he came down from the mount. When men have been conversing with Christ in an extraordinary manner, a sensible effect of it *remains* upon them; there is something remarkable in their disposition and frame, of which if we take knowledge, and trace to its cause, we shall find it is because they have been with Jesus, Acts iv. 13.

SECT. VIII.

Truly gracious affections differ from those that are false and delusive, in that they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ.

The evidence of this in the scripture is very abundant. If we judge of the nature of Christianity, and the proper spirit of the gospel, by the word of God, this spirit is what may, by way of eminency, be called *the Christian spirit;* and may be looked upon as the true, and distinguishing disposition of the hearts of Christians, as such. When some of the disciples of Christ, said something, through inconsideration and infirmity, that was not agreeable to such a spirit, he told them that *they knew not what manner of spirit they were of,* Luke ix. 55. implying, that this spirit of which I am speaking, is the proper spirit of his religion and kingdom. All real disciples of Christ, have this spirit in them; and not only so, but they *are of* this spirit; it is the spirit by which they are so possessed and governed, that it is their true and proper character. This is evident by what the wise man says, Prov. xvii. 27. (having respect plainly to such a spirit as this), *A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit;* and by the particular description Christ gives of the qualities and temper of such as are truly blessed, that shall obtain mercy, and are God's children and heirs, Matth. v. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children*

* "Do you think the Holy Ghost comes on a man, as on Balaam, by immediate acting, and then leaves him, and then he has nothing?"—(Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 126.)

of God. And that this spirit is the special character of the elect of God, is manifest by Col. iii. 12, 13. *Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* The apostle discoursing of that temper and disposition which he speaks of, as the most excellent and essential thing in Christianity—*that* without which none are true Christians, and the most glorious profession and gifts are nothing, calling this spirit by the name of *charity*—describes it thus; (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.) *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil.* And the same apostle, (Gal. v.) designedly declaring the distinguishing marks and fruits of true Christian grace, chiefly insists on the things that appertain to such a temper and spirit, (ver. 22, 23.) *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* And so does the apostle James in describing true grace, or *that wisdom that is from above*, with that declared design, that others who are of a contrary spirit may not deceive themselves—and lie against the truth, in professing to be Christians, when they are not—James iii. 14—17. *If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.*

Every thing that appertains to holiness of heart, does indeed belong to the nature of true Christianity, and the character of Christians; but a spirit of holiness, as appearing in some particular graces, may more especially be called the Christian spirit or temper. Some amiable qualities and virtues more especially agree with the nature of the gospel constitution, and Christian profession; because there is a special agreeableness in them with those divine *attributes* which God has more remarkably manifested and glorified in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, the grand subject of the Christian revelation. There is also a special agreeableness with those *virtues* which were so wonderfully exercised by Jesus Christ towards us in that affair, and the blessed example he hath therein set us. And they are peculiarly agreeable to the special drift and *design* of the work of redemption, the *benefits* we thereby receive, and the *relation* that it brings us into, to God and one another. And what are these virtues but such as humility, meekness, love, forgiveness, and mercy; which belong to the character of Christians, as such?

These things are spoken of as what are especially the character of Jesus Christ himself, the great head of the Christian church. They are so spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament; as in that cited Matth. xxi. 5. *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.* So Christ himself speaks of them, Matth. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* The same appears by the name by which Christ is so often called in scripture, viz. THE LAMB. And as these things are especially the character of Christ; so they are all especially the character of Christians. Christians are *Christ-like;* none deserve the name who are not so in their prevailing character. *The new man is renewed, after the image of him that created him,* Col. iii. 10. All true Christians *behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, by his Spirit,* 2 Cor. iii. 18. The elect are all *predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, that he might be the first-born among many brethren,* Rom. viii. 29. *As we have borne the image of the first man, that is earthly, so we must also bear the image of the heavenly: for as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly,* 1 Cor. xv. 47—49. Christ is full of grace; and Christians all receive of his fulness, and grace for grace; i. e. there is grace in Christians *answering* to grace in Christ, such an answerableness as there is between the wax and the seal. There is character for character; such kind of graces, such a spirit and temper; the same things that belong to Christ's character belong to theirs. In that disposition wherein Christ's character in a special manner consists, does his image in a special manner consist. Christians who shine by reflecting the light of the Sun of righteousness, shine with the same sort of brightness, the same mild, sweet and pleasant beams. These lamps of the spiritual temple, enkindled by fire from heaven, burn with the same sort of flame. The branch is of the same nature with the stock and root, has the same sap, and bears the same sort of fruit. The members have the same kind of life with the head. It would be strange if Christians should not be of the same temper and spirit with that of Christ; when they are *his flesh and his bone,* yea, are *one spirit,* 1 Cor. vi. 17. and so live, that it is *not they that live, but Christ that lives in them.* A Christian spirit is Christ's *mark,* which he sets upon the souls of his people; his *seal* in their foreheads, bearing his image and superscription. Christians are the followers of Christ, as they are obedient to that call of Christ, Matth. xi. 28, 29. *Come to me, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* They follow him as the Lamb; Rev. xiv. 4. *These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.* True Christians are as it were

clothed with the meek, quiet, and loving temper of Christ; for *as many as are in Christ, have put on Christ.* And in this respect *the church is clothed with the sun,* not only by being clothed with his imputed righteousness, but also by being adorned with his graces, Rom. xiii. 14. Christ the great Shepherd, is himself a lamb, and believers are also lambs; all the flock are lambs; John xxi. 15. *Feed my lambs.* Luke x. 3. *I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.* The redemption of the church by Christ from the power of the devil, was typified of old by David's delivering the *lamb* out of the mouth of the lion and the bear.

That such virtue is the very nature of the Christian spirit, or the spirit that worketh in Christ and in his members, is evident by this, that *the dove* is the very symbol or emblem, chosen of God to represent it. Those things are the fittest emblems of other things, which best represent *that* which is most distinguishing in their nature. The spirit that descended on Christ, when he was anointed of the Father, descended on him *like a dove.* The dove is a noted emblem of meekness, harmlessness, peace, and love. But the same Spirit that descended on the head of the church, descends to the members. *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into their hearts,* Gal. iv. 6. And *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Rom. viii. 9. There is but one Spirit to the whole mystical body, head and members, (1 Cor. vi. 17. Eph. iv. 4.) Christ breathes his own Spirit on his disciples, John xx. 22. As Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, descending on him like a dove, so Christians *have an anointing from the Holy One,* 1 John ii. 20, 27. They are anointed with the same oil; it is the same *precious ointment on the head, that goes down to the skirts of the garments.* And on both it is a spirit of peace and love: Psal. cxxxiii. 1, 2. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.* The oil on Aaron's garments, had the same sweet and inimitable odour with that on his head; the smell of the same sweet spices. Christian affections, and a Christian behaviour, are the flowing out of the savour of Christ's sweet ointments. Because the church has a dove-like temper and disposition, therefore it is said of her that she has dove's eyes, Cant. i. 15. *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, thou hast dove's eyes.* And chap. iv. 1. *Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair, thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks.* The same is said of Christ, chap. vi. 12. *His eyes are as the eyes of doves.* And the church is frequently compared to a dove, Cant. ii. 14. *O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock.*—Chap. v. 2. *Open to me, my love, my dove.* And chap. vi. 9. *My dove, my*

undefiled is but one. Psal. lxviii. 13. *Ye shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* And lxxiv. 19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked.* The dove that Noah sent out of the ark—that could find no rest for the sole of her foot until she returned —was a type of a true saint.

Meekness is so much the character of the saints, that *the meek* and *the godly* are used as synonimous terms in scripture: so Psal. xxxviii. 10, 11. the wicked and the meek are set in opposition, as wicked and godly, *Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be: but the meek shall inherit the earth.* So Psal. cxlvii. 6. *The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*

It is doubtless very much on this account, that Christ represents all his disciples, though the heirs of heaven, as *little children,* Matth. xix. 14. *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.* Matth. x. 42. *Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of those little ones a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.* Matth. xviii. 6. *Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c.* ver. 10. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.* Ver. 14. *It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.* John xiii. 33. *Little children, yet a little while I am with you.* Little children are innocent and harmless; they do not much mischief in the world; men need not be afraid of them; their anger does not last long, they do not lay up injuries in high resentment, entertaining deep rooted malice. So Christians, in malice are children, 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Little children are not guileful and deceitful, but plain and simple; they are not versed in the arts of fiction and deceit; and are strangers to artful disguises. They are yielding and flexible, and not wilful and obstinate; do not trust to their own understanding, but rely on the instructions of parents, and others of superior understanding. Here is therefore a fit and lively emblem of the followers of the Lamb. Persons being thus like little children, is not only a thing highly commendable, what Christians aim at, and which some of extraordinary proficiency attain: but it is their *universal* character, and absolutely *necessary* in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven; Matth. xviii. 3. *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Mark x. 15. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

But here some may be ready to say, Is there no such thing as Christian fortitude, and boldness for Christ, being good soldiers

in the Christian warfare, and coming out bold against the enemies of Christ and his people?

To which I answer, there doubtless is such a thing. The whole Christian life is fitly compared to a warfare. The most eminent Christians are the best soldiers, endued with the greatest degrees of Christian fortitude. And it is the duty of God's people to be stedfast, and vigorous in their opposition to the designs and ways of such as are endeavouring to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, and the interest of religion. But yet many persons seem to be quite mistaken concerning the nature of Christian fortitude. It is an exceeding diverse thing from a brutal fierceness, or the boldness of beasts of prey. True Christian fortitude consists in strength of mind, through grace, exerted in two things: in ruling and suppressing the *evil* passions and affections of the mind; and in stedfastly and freely exerting, and following *good* affections and dispositions, without being hindered by sinful fear, or the opposition of enemies. But the *passions restrained*, and kept under in the exercise of this Christian strength and fortitude, are those very passions that are vigorously and violently *exerted* in a false boldness for Christ. And those affections which are vigorously exerted in true fortitude, are those Christian holy affections, that are directly contrary to the others. Though Christian fortitude appears in withstanding and counteracting enemies without us, yet it much more appears in resisting and suppressing the enemies that are within us; because they are our worst and strongest enemies, and have greatest advantage against us. The strength of the good soldier of Jesus Christ appears in nothing more, than in stedfastly maintaining the holy calm, meekness, sweetness, and benevolence of his mind, amidst all the storms, injuries, strange behaviour, and surprising acts and events of this evil and unreasonable world. The scripture seems to intimate that true fortitude consists chiefly in this, Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.*

The surest way to make a right judgment of what is a holy fortitude in fighting with God's enemies, is to look to the Captain of all God's hosts, our great leader and example, and see wherein *his* fortitude and valour appeared, in his chief conflict. View him in the greatest battle that ever was, or ever will be fought with these enemies, when he fought with them all alone, and of the people there was none with him. See *how* he exercised his fortitude in the highest degree, and got that glorious victory which will be celebrated in the praises and triumphs of all the hosts of heaven, through all eternity. Behold Jesus Christ in his last sufferings, when his enemies in earth and hell

made their most violent attack upon him, compassing him round on every side, like roaring lions. Doubtless here we shall see the fortitude of a holy warrior and champion in the cause of God, in its highest perfection and greatest lustre, and an example fit for the soldiers to follow, that fight under this Captain. But how did he show his holy boldness and valour at that time? Not in the exercise of any fiery passions; not in fierce and violent speeches, vehemently declaiming against the intolerable wickedness of opposers, *giving them their own* in plain terms; but in not opening his mouth when afflicted and oppressed, in going as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, not opening his mouth; praying that the Father would forgive his cruel enemies, because they knew not what they did; nor shedding others' blood, but with all-conquering patience and love shedding his own. Indeed one of his disciples, who made a forward pretence to *boldness for Christ*, and confidently declared he would sooner die with Christ than deny him, began to lay about him with a sword: but Christ meekly rebukes him, and heals the wound he gives. And never was the patience, meekness, love, and forgiveness of Christ, in so glorious a manifestation, as at that time. Never did he appear so much a *Lamb*, and never did he shew so much of the *dove-like* spirit, as at that time. If therefore we see any of the followers of Christ, in the midst of the most violent, unreasonable, and wicked opposition, maintaining the humility, quietness, and gentleness of a lamb, and the harmlessness, love, and sweetness of a dove, we may well judge that here is *a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

When persons are fierce and violent, and exert their sharp and bitter passions, it shows *weakness*, instead of strength and fortitude. 1 Cor. iii. at the beginning, *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.—For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

There is a pretended boldness for Christ that arises from no better principle than pride. A man may be forward to expose himself to the dislike of the world, and even to provoke their displeasure, out of pride. For it is the nature of spiritual pride to cause men to seek distinction and singularity; and so oftentimes to set themselves at war with those whom they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their party. True boldness for Christ is universal, and carries men above the displeasure of friends and foes; so that they will forsake all rather than Christ; and will rather offend all parties, and be thought meanly of by all, than offend Christ. And that duty which tries whether a man is willing to be despised by those of his own par-

ty, and thought the least worthy to be regarded by them, is a more proper trial of his boldness for Christ, than his being forward to expose himself to the reproach of opposers. The apostle declined to seek glory, not only of Heathens and Jews, but of Christians; as he declares, 1 Thess. ii. 26*. He is bold for Christ, who has Christian fortitude enough to confess his fault openly, when he has committed one that requires it, and as it were to come down upon his knees before opposers. Such things as these are much greater evidence of holy boldness, than resolutely and fiercely confronting opposers.

As some are much mistaken concerning the nature of true *boldness* for Christ, so they are concerning Christian *zeal*. It is indeed a flame, but a sweet one; or rather it is the heat and fervour of a sweet flame. For the flame of which it is the heat, is no other than that of divine love, or Christian charity; which is the sweetest and most benevolent thing that can be, in the heart of man or angel. Zeal is the fervour of this flame, as it ardently and vigorously goes out towards the good that is its object; and so consequently in opposition to the evil that is contrary to, and impedes it. There is indeed opposition, vigorous opposition, that is an attendant of it; but it is against *things*, and not *persons*. Bitterness against the *persons* of men is no part of, but is contrary to it; insomuch that the warmer true zeal is, and the higher it is raised, so much the further are persons from such bitterness, and so much fuller of love both to the evil and to the good. It is no other, in its very nature and essence, than the fervour of Christian love. And as to what opposition there is in it to *things*, it is *firstly* and chiefly against the *evil things* in the person *himself* who has this zeal: against the enemies of God and holiness in his own heart; (as these are most in his view, and what he has most to do with;) and but *secondarily* against the sins of others. And therefore there is nothing in a true Christian zeal contrary to the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love; the spirit of a little child, a lamb and dove, that has been spoken of; but is entirely agreeable to, and tends to promote it.

But I would say something particularly concerning this Christian spirit as exercised in these three things, *forgiveness*, *love* and *mercy*. The scripture is very clear and express concerning the absolute *necessity* of each of these, as belonging to the temper and character of every Christian. A *forgiving* spirit is necessary, or a disposition to overlook and forgive injuries. Christ gives it to us both as a negative and positive evidence; and is express in

* Mr. Shepard, speaking of hypocrites affecting applause, says, "Hence men forsake their friends, and trample under foot the scorns of the world: they have credit elsewhere. To maintain their interest in the love of godly men, they will suffer much." *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 180.

teaching us, that if we are of such a spirit, it is a sign we are in a state of forgiveness and favour ourselves; and that if we are not of such a spirit, we are not forgiven of God; and seems to take special care that we should always bear it on our minds. Matth. vi. 12, 14, 15. *Forgive us our debt, as we forgive our debtors. For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Christ expresses the same at another time, Mark xi. 25, 26, and again in Matth. xviii. 22, to the end, in the parable of the servant, who owed his lord ten thousand talents, and who would not forgive his fellow-servant an hundred pence; and therefore was delivered to the tormentors. In the application of the parable Christ says, ver. 35. *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

And that all true saints are of a *loving*, benevolent and beneficent temper, the scripture is very plain and abundant. Without it, the apostle tells us, though we should speak with the tongues of men and angels, we are as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal: and though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; yet without this spirit we are nothing. There is no one virtue, or disposition of mind, so often and so expressly insisted on, as marks laid down in the New Testament, whereby to know true Christians. It is often given as a sign peculiarly distinguishing, by which all may know Christ's disciples, and by which they may know themselves; and is often laid down, both as a negative and positive evidence. Christ calls the law of love, by way of eminence, *his commandment*, John xiii. 34. *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love another.* And Chap. xv. 12. *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* And ver. 17. *These things I command you, that ye love one another.* And says, chap. xiii. 35, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* And Chap. xiv. 21. (still with a special reference to this which he calls *his* commandment), *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* The beloved disciple, who had so much of this sweet temper himself, abundantly insists on it, in his epistles. Not one of the apostles is so express in laying down signs of grace, for professors to try themselves by, as he; and in his signs, he insists scarcely on any thing but a spirit of Christian love, and an agreeable practice; 1 John ii. 9, 10. *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother*

abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. Chap. iii. 14. *We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.* ver. 18, 19. *My little children, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* ver. 23, 24. *This is his commandment, that we should love one another. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* Chap. iv. 7, 8. *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.* ver. 12, 13. *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* ver. 16. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* ver. 20. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

And the scripture is as plain as possible, that none are true saints, but those who are of a disposition to *pity* and *relieve* their fellow-creatures, who are poor, indigent, and afflicted; Psal. xxxvii. 21. *The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.* ver. 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth.* Psal. cxii. 5. *A good man sheweth favour and lendeth.* ver. 9. *He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor.* Prov. xiv. 31. *He that honoureth God, hath mercy on the poor.* Prov. xxi. 26. *The righteous giveth, and spareth not.* Jer. xxii. 16. *He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord.* Jam. i. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,* &c. Hos. vi. 6. *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings.* Matth. v. 7. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.* 2. Cor. viii. 8. *I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.* Jam. ii. 13—16. *For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.—What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man may say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?* 1 John iii. 17. *Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother*

have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Christ in that description he gives us of the day of judgment, Matth. xxv. (which is the most particular in all the Bible) represents, that judgment will be passed at that day, according as men have been of a merciful spirit and practice, or otherwise. Christ's design in giving such a description of the process of that day, is plainly to possess all his followers with the apprehension, that unless this was their spirit and practice, there was no hope of their being accepted and owned by him at that day. We find in scripture, that a *righteous man*, and a *merciful man* are synonimous expressions; Is. lvii. 1. *The* righteous *perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and* merciful men *are taken away, none considering that the* righteous *is taken away from evil to come.*

Thus we see how full, clear, and abundant, the evidence from scripture is, that those who are truly gracious, are under the government of that lamb-like, dove-like Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that this is essentially and eminently the nature of the saving grace of the gospel, and the proper spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine, that all truly Christian affections are attended with such a spirit; and that this is the natural tendency of the fear and hope, the sorrow and the joy, the confidence and the zeal of true Christians.

None will understand me, that true Christians have no remains of a contrary spirit, and can never, in any instances, be guilty of a behaviour not agreeable to such a spirit. But this I affirm, and shall affirm until I deny the Bible to be any thing worth, that every thing in Christians that belongs to true Christianity, is of this tendency, and works this way: and that there is no true Christian upon earth, but is so under the prevailing power of such a spirit, that he is properly denominated from it, and it is truly and justly his character. Therefore, ministers and others have no warrant from Christ to encourage persons of a contrary character and behaviour, to think they are converted, because they tell a fair story of illuminations and discoveries. In so doing, they would set up their own wisdom against Christ's, and judge *against* that rule by which Christ has declared all men should know his disciples. Some persons place religion so much in certain transient illuminations and impressions, (especially if they are in such a particular method), and so little in the spirit and temper, that they greatly deform religion, and form notions of Christianity quite different from what it is, as delineated in the scriptures. The scripture knows no true Christians, of a sordid, selfish, cross and contentious spirit. Nothing can be a greater absurdity, than a morose, hard, close, high-spirited, spiteful, true Christian. We must learn the way of bringing men to rules; and

not rules to men, and so strain the rules of God's word, in order to take in ourselves, and some of our neighbours, until we make them wholly of none effect.

It is true, allowances must be made for men's natural temper; but we must not allow men, that once were wolves and serpents, to be now converted, without any remarkable change in the spirit of their mind. The change made by true conversion, is wont to be most remarkable, with respect to the past notorious wickedness of the person. Grace has as great a tendency to restrain and mortify such sins, as are contrary to the spirit that has been spoken of, as it has to mortify darkness or lasciviousness. Yea, the scripture represents the change wrought by gospel-grace, as especially appearing in an alteration of the former sort; Is. xi. 6—9. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* And to the same purpose is Is. lxv. 25. Accordingly we find, that in the primitive times of the Christian church, converts were remarkably changed in this respect; Tit. iii. 3. *&c. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,—he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And Col. iii. 7, 8. *In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

SECT. IX.

Gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended with a Christian tenderness of spirit.

False affections, however persons may seem to be melted by them while they are new, have a tendency in the end to harden the heart. A disposition to some kind of passions may be established; such as imply self-seeking, self-exaltation, and opposition to others. But false affections, with the delusion that attends them, finally tend to stupify the mind, and shut it up against

those affections wherein tenderness of heart consists. The effect of them at least is, that persons in the settled frame of their minds, become less affected with their present and past sins, and less conscientious with respect to future sins; less moved with the warnings and cautions of God's word, or chastisements in his providence; more careless of the frame of their hearts, and the manner and tendency of their behaviour; less quick-sighted to discern what is sinful, and less afraid of the appearance of evil, than they were while under legal awakenings and fears of hell. Now they have been the subjects of impressions and affections, have a high opinion of themselves, and look on their state to be safe, they can be much more easy than before, though living in the neglect of duties that are troublesome and inconvenient.—They are much more slow and partial in complying with difficult commands: and are not alarmed at the appearance of their own defects and transgressions. They are emboldened to favour themselves more, with respect to the labour and painful exactness in their walk, and more easily yield to temptations, and the solicitations of their lusts; and have far less care of their behaviour, when they come into the holy presence of God, in the time of public or private worship. Formerly it may be, under legal convictions, they took much pains in religion, and denied themselves in many things: but now, thinking themselves out of the danger of hell, they very much put off the burden of the cross, and save themselves the trouble of difficult duties, allowing themselves more of the enjoyment of their ease and lusts.

Such persons as these, instead of embracing Christ as their *Saviour from sin*, trust in him as the *Saviour of their sins;* instead of flying to him as their refuge *from their spiritual enemies*, they make use of him as the defence *of their spiritual enemies, from God*, and to strengthen them against him. They make Christ the minister of sin, the great officer and vicegerent of the devil, to strengthen his interest, and make him above all things in the world strong against JEHOVAH; so that they may sin against him with good courage, and without any fear, being effectually secured from restraints by his most solemn warnings and most awful threatenings. They trust in Christ to preserve to them the quiet enjoyment of their sins, and to be their shield to defend them from God's displeasure; while they come close to him, even to his bosom, the place of his children, to fight against him, with their mortal weapons hid under their skirts*. How-

* These are hypocrites that believe, but fail in regard to the use of the gospel, and of the Lord Jesus. And these we read of, Jude 3, viz. of some men "that did turn grace in to wantonness." For therein appears the exceeding evil of a man's heart, that not only the law, but the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus, works in him all manner of unrighteousness. And it is too common for men at the first work of conversion, Oh then to cry for grace and Christ, and afterwards grow li-

ever, some of these, at the same time, make a great profession of love to God, and assurance of his favour, and great joy in tasting the sweetness of his love.

After this manner *they* trusted in Christ, of whom the apostle Jude speaks, who *crept in* among the saints *unknown*; but were really *ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness*, Jude 4. These are they that trust in their being righteous; and because God has promised that *the righteous shall surely live*, or certainly be saved, are therefore emboldened to *commit iniquity*, whom God threatens in Ezek. xxxiii. 13. *When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity; all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.*

Gracious affections are of a quite contrary tendency; they turn a heart of stone more and more into a heart of flesh. Holy love and hope are principles vastly more efficacious upon the heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a dread of sin, or whatever might displease and offend God; and to engage it to watchfulness, and care, and strictness, than a slavish fear of hell. Gracious affections, as was observed before, flow out of a contrite heart, or (as the word signifies) a bruised heart, bruised and broken with godly sorrow; which makes the heart tender, as

centious, live and lie in the breach of the law, and take their warrant for their course from the gospel." Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 126.

Again, p. 232. Mr. Shepard speaks of such hypocrites as those, "who, like strange eggs being put into the same nest, where honest men have lived, they have been hatched up; and when they are young, keep their nest, and live by crying and opening their mouths wide after the Lord, and the food of his word; but when their wings are grown, and they have got some affections, some knowledge, some hope of mercy, are hardened thereby to fly from God." And adds, "Can that man be good, whom God's grace makes worse?"

Again, Part II. p. 167. "When men fly to Christ in times of peace, that so they may preserve their sins with greater peace of conscience; so that sin makes them fly to Christ, as well as misery; not that they may destroy and abolish sin, but they may be preserved in their sins with peace; then men may be said to apprehend Christ only by a seeming faith. Many an heart secretly saith this, If I can have my sin, and peace, and conscience quiet for the present, and God merciful to pardon it afterward: hence he doth rely (as he saith) only on the mercy of God in Christ: and now this hardens and blinds him, and makes him secure, and his faith is sermon proof, nothing stirs him. And were it not for their faith they should despair, but this keeps them up. And now they think if they have any trouble of mind, the devil troubles them; and so make Christ and faith protectors of sin, not purifiers from sin; which is most dreadful; turning grace to wantonness, as they did sacrifice. So these would sin under the shadow of Christ, because the shadow is good and sweet, Mic. iii. 11. They had subtle sly ends in good duties; for therein may lie a man's sin: yet they lean upon the Lord. When money-changers come into the temple, *You have made it a den of thieves.* Thieves when hunted fly to their den or cave, and there they are secure against all searchers, and hue and cries: so here. But Christ whipped them out. So when men are pursued with cries and fears of conscience, away to Christ they go as to their den: not as saints, to pray and lament out the life of their sin there; but to preserve their sin. This is vile; will the Lord receive such?

bruised flesh is tender, and easily hurt. Godly sorrow has much greater influence to make the heart tender, than mere legal sorrow from selfish principles.

The tenderness of the heart of a true Christian, is elegantly signified by our Saviour, in his comparing such a one to a *little child.* The flesh of a little child is very tender: so is the heart of one that is new born. This is also represented in what we are told of Naaman's cure of his leprosy, by his washing in Jordan, by the direction of the prophet; which was undoubtedly a type of the renewing of the soul, by washing in the laver of regeneration. We are told, 2 Kings v. 14. that *he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, acccording to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child.* Not only is the *flesh* of a little child tender, but his *mind* is tender. A little child has his heart easily moved, wrought upon, and bowed: so is a Christian in spiritual things. A little child is apt to be affected with sympathy, to weep with them that weep, and cannot well bear to see others in distress: so it is with a Christian; John xi. 35. Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26. A little child is easily won by kindness: so is a Christian. A little child is easily affected with grief at temporal evils, his heart is melted, and he falls a-weeping; thus tender is the heart of a Christian, with regard to the evil of sin. A little child is easily affrighted at the appearance of outward evils, or any thing that threatens its hurt: so is a Christian apt to be alarmed at the appearance of moral evil, and any thing that threatens the hurt of the soul. A little child, when it meets enemies, or fierce beasts, is not apt to trust its own strength, but flies to its parents for refuge; so a saint is not self confident in engaging spiritual enemies, but flies to Christ. A little child is apt to be suspicious of evil in places of danger, afraid in the dark, afraid when left solitary, or far from home: so is a saint apt to be sensible of his spiritual dangers, jealous of himself, full of fear when he cannot see his way plain before him, afraid to be left alone, and to be at a distance from God; Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief.* A little child is apt to be afraid of superiors, and to dread their anger, and tremble at their frowns and threatenings: so is a true saint with respect to God; Psal. cxix. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* Is. lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and trembleth at my word.* ver. 5. *Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word.* Ezra ix. 4. *Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel.* chap. x. 3. *According to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God.* A little child approaches superiors

with awe: so do the saints approach God with holy awe and reverence; Job xiii. 11. *Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?* Holy fear is so much the nature of true godliness, that it is called in scripture by no other name more frequently, than the *fear of God.*

Hence gracious affections do not tend to make men bold, forward, noisy and boisterous; but rather to *speak, trembling;* Hos. xiii. 1. *When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.* It tends to clothe them with a kind of holy fear in all their behaviour towards God and man; agreeable to Psal. ii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 15. 2 Cor. vii. 15. Eph. vi. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 2. Rom. xi. 20.

But, is there no such thing as a holy boldness in prayer, and the duties of divine worship? There is doubtless such a thing; and it is chiefly to be found in eminent saints, persons of great degrees of faith and love. But this holy boldness is not in the least opposite to *reverence;* though it be to *disunion* and *servility.* It abolishes or lessens that disposition which arises from *moral distance* or *alienation:* and also *distance of relation,* as that of a slave: but not at all, that which becomes the *natural distance,* whereby we are infinitely inferior. No boldness in poor sinful worms of the dust, who have a right view of God and themselves, will prompt them to approach God with less fear and reverence, than spotless and glorious angels in heaven, who cover their faces before his throne, Is. vi. 6. &c. Rebecca, (who in her marriage with Isaac, in almost all its circumstances, was manifestly a great type of the church, the spouse of Christ), when she meets Isaac, alights from her camel, and takes a vail, and covers herself; although she was brought to him as his bride, to be with him, in the nearest relation, and most intimate union*. Elijah, that great prophet, who had so much holy familiarity with God, at a time of special nearness to him, even when he conversed with him in the mount, wrapped his face in his mantle. Which was not because he was terrified with any servile fear, by the terrible *wind,* and *earthquake,* and *fire;* but after these were all over, and God spake to him as a friend, *in a still small voice;* 1 Kings xix. 12, 13. *And after the fire, a still small voice; and it was so, when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle.* And Moses, with whom God spake face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, and who was distinguished above all the prophets, in the familiarity with God to which he was admitted—at a time when he was brought nearest of all, when God showed him his glory in that same mount, where he afterwards spake to Elijah—*made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped,*

* Dr. Ames, in his Cases of Conscience, Book III. chap. iv. speaks of an holy modesty in the worship of God, as one sign of true humility.

Exod. xxxiv. 8. There is in some persons a most unsuitable and unsufferable boldness, in their addresses to the great JEHOVAH—an affectation of holy boldness, and ostentation of eminent nearness and familiarity—the very thoughts of which would make them shrink into nothing, with horror and confusion, if they saw the distance that is between God and them. They are like the Pharisee, that boldly drew near, in confidence of his own eminence in holiness. Whereas, if they saw their vileness, they would be more like the publican, that *stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven: but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* It becomes such sinful creatures as we, to approach a holy God, (although with faith, and without terror) yet with contrition, penitent shame, and confusion of face. It is foretold that this should be the disposition of the church, at the time of her highest privileges on earth, in her latter day of glory, when God should remarkably comfort her, by revealing to her his covenant-mercy; Ezek. xvi. 60, &c. *I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed. And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* The woman we read of in the viith. chapter of Luke, who was an eminent saint, and had much of that true love which casts out fear, by Christ's own testimony, ver. 47.) approached Christ in an acceptable manner when she came with humble modesty, reverence and shame. She stood at his feet, weeping *behind him*, as not fit to appear before his face, and washed his feet with her tears.

One reason why gracious affections are attended with this tenderness of spirit, is, that true grace tends to promote convictions of conscience. Persons are wont to have some convictions of conscience before they have any grace: and if afterwards they are truly converted, have true repentance, joy, and peace in believing; this has a tendency to put an end to *terrors*, but has no tendency to put an end to *convictions of sin;* it rather increases them. Grace does not stupify a man's conscience; but makes it more sensible, more easily and thoroughly to discern the sinfulness of that which is sinful, and to receive a greater conviction of the heinous and dreadful nature of sin. The conscience becomes susceptive of a quicker and deeper sense of sin, and the man is more convinced of his own sinfulness, and the wickedness of his heart; consequently grace has a tendency to make him more jealous of his heart. Grace tends to give the soul a further and

better conviction of the *same* things concerning sin, that it was convinced of under a legal work of the Spirit; viz. its great contrariety to the will, and law, and honour of God, the greatness of God's hatred of it, and displeasure against it, and the dreadful punishment it exposes to and deserves. And not only so, but it convinces the soul of something further concerning sin, of which it saw nothing, while only under *legal convictions;* and that is, the infinitely hateful nature of sin, and its dreadfulness upon that account. And this makes the heart tender with respect to sin; like David's heart, that smote him when he had cut off Saul's skirt. The heart of a true penitent is like a burnt child that dreads the fire. Whereas, on the contrary, he that has had a counterfeit repentance, and false comforts and joys, is like iron that has been suddenly heated and quenched; it becomes much harder than before. A false conversion puts an end to convictions of conscience; and so, either takes away, or much diminishes that conscienciousness which was manifested under a work of the law.

All gracious affections have a tendency to promote this Christian tenderness of heart. Not only godly sorrow, but even a gracious joy does this. Psal. ii. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* As also a gracious hope; Psal. xxxiii. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy.* And Psal. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.* Yea, the most confident and assured hope, that is truly gracious, has this tendency. The higher a holy hope is raised, the more there is of this Christian tenderness. The banishing of servile fear by a holy assurance, is attended with a proportionable increase of a reverential fear. The diminishing of the fear of God's displeasure in future punishment, is attended with a proportionable increase of fear of his displeasure *itself;* a diminished fear of hell, with an increase of the fear of sin. The vanishing of jealousies concerning the person's state, is attended with a proportionable increase of jealousy of his heart, in a distrust of its strength, wisdom, stability, faithfulness, &c. The less apt he is to be afraid of natural evil—having *his heart fixed, trusting in God*, and so, *not afraid of evil tidings*—the more apt is he to be alarmed with the appearance of moral evil, or the evil of sin. As he has more holy boldness, so he has less of self-confidence, or a forward assuming boldness, and more modesty. As he is more sure than others of deliverance from hell, so he has a greater sense of its desert. He is less apt than others to be shaken in faith; but more apt to be moved with solemn warnings, with God's frowns, and with the calamities of others. He

has the firmest comfort, but the softest heart: richer than others, but poorest of all in spirit. He is the tallest and strongest saint, but the least and tenderest child among them.

SECT. X.

Another thing wherein those affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false, is beautiful symmetry and proportion.

Not that the symmetry of the virtues and gracious affections of the saints, in this life, is perfect: it oftentimes is in many things defective, through the imperfection of grace, want of proper instructions, errors in judgment, some particular unhappiness of natural temper, defects in education, and many other disadvantages that might be mentioned. But yet there is in no wise that monstrous disproportion in gracious affections, and the various parts of true religion in the saints, that is very commonly to be observed in the false religion and counterfeit graces of hypocrites.

In the truly holy affections of the saints is found that proportion, which is the natural consequence of the universality of their sanctification. They have the whole image of Christ upon them: they have *put off the old man*, and have *put on the new man* entire in all his parts and members. *It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell:* there is in him every grace; *he is full of grace and truth:* and they that are Christ's *of his fulness receive, and grace for grace;* (John i. 14, 16.) There is every grace in them which is in Christ, *grace for grace:* that is, grace answerable to grace: there is no grace in Christ, but there is its image in believers to answer it. The image is a *true* image; and there is something of the same beautiful proportion in the image, which is in the original; there is feature for feature, and member for member. There is symmetry and beauty in God's workmanship. The natural body which God hath made, consists of many members; and all are in a beautiful proportion: so the new man consists of various graces and affections. The body of one that was born a perfect child, may fail of exact proportion through distemper, weakness, or injury of some of its members; yet the disproportion is in no measure like that of those who are born monsters.

It is with hypocrites, as it was with Ephraim of old, at a time when God greatly complains of their hypocrisy; Hos. vii. *Ephraim is a cake not turned*, half roasted and half raw: there is commonly no manner of uniformity in their affections. There is in many of them a great partiality, with regard to the several kinds of religious affections; great affections in some things, and

no proportion in others. A holy hope and holy fear go together in the saints, Psal. xxxiii. 18. and cxlvii. 11. But in some of these there is the most confident hope, while they are void of reverence, self-jealousy and caution, and while they to a great degree cast off fear. In the saints, joy and holy fear go together, though the joy be never so great: as it was with the disciples, in that joyful morning of Christ's resurrection, Matth. xxviii. 8. *And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and* GREAT *joy**. But many of these rejoice without trembling: their joy is truly opposite to godly fear.

But particularly, one great difference between saints and hypocrites is this, that the joy and comfort of the former is attended with godly sorrow and mourning for sin. They have not only sorrow to prepare them for their first comfort, but after they are comforted, and their joy is established. As it is foretold of the church of God, that they should mourn and loathe themselves for their sins, after they were returned from the captivity, and were settled in the land of Canaan, the land of rest, the land flowing with milk and honey, Ezek. xx. 42, 43. *And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed;* (also Ezek. xvi. 61—63.) A true saint is like a little child in this respect: he never had any godly sorrow before he was born again; but since, has it often in exercise. A little child, before it is born, and while it remains in darkness, never cries; but as soon as ever it sees the light, it begins to cry; and thenceforward is often crying. Although Christ hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, so that we are freed from the *sorrow of punishment*, and may now sweetly feed upon the comforts Christ hath purchased for us; yet that hinders not but that our feeding on these comforts should be attended with the *sorrow of repentance*. Thus of old, the children of Israel were commanded evermore to feed upon the paschal lamb with bitter herbs*. True saints are spoken

* "Renewed care and diligence follow the sealings of the Spirit. Now is the soul at the foot of Christ, as Mary was at the sepulchre, 'with fear and great joy.' He that travels the road with a rich treasure about him, is afraid of a thief in every bush." (Flavel's Sacramental Meditations, Med. 4.)

† "If repentance accompanies faith, it is no presumption to believe. Many know the sin, and hence believe in Christ, trust in Christ, and there is an end of their faith. But what confession and sorrow for sin? what more love to Christ follows this faith? Truly none. Nay, their faith is the cause why they have none. For they think, if I trust in Christ to forgive me, he will do it; and there is an end of the business. Verily this hedge faith, this bramble-faith, that catches hold on Christ, and pricks and scratches Christ, by more impenitency, more contempt of him, is mere presumption; which shall one day be burnt up and destroyed by

of in scripture, not only as those that *have* mourned for sin, but as those that *do* mourn, whose manner it is still to mourn; Matth. v. 4. *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

Not only is there often in hypocrites, an essential deficiency, as to the various kinds of religious affections; but also a strange partiality and disproportion, in the same affections, with regard to different objects.—Thus as to the affection of *love*, some make high pretences, and a great show of love to God and Christ, and it may have been greatly affected with what they have heard or thought concerning them: but they have not a spirit of love and benevolence towards men, but are disposed to contention, envy, revenge, and evil-speaking; and will, it may be, suffer an old grudge to rest in their bosoms towards a neighbour for seven years together, if not twice seven years; living in real ill-will and bitternes of spirit towards him. And it may be in their dealings with their neighbours, they are not very strict and conscientious in observing the rule of *doing to others, as they would that they should do to them:* 1 John iv. 20. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* On the other hand, there are others who appear as if they had a great deal of benevolence to men, who are very good-natured and generous in their way; but have no love to God.

And as to love to men, there are some who have flowing affections to some; but their love is far from being of so extensive and universal a nature, as a truly Christian love is.—They are full of

the fire of God's jealousy. Fye upon that faith, that serves only to keep a man from being tormented before his time! Your sins would be your sorrows, but that your faith quiets you. But if faith be accompanied with repentance, mourning for sin, more esteem of God's grace in Christ, so that nothing breaks thy heart more than the thoughts of Christ's unchangeable love to one so vile, and this love makes thee love much, and love him the more; as thy sin increaseth, so thou desirest thy love's increase; and now the stream of thy thoughts run, how thou mayst live to him that died for thee: this was Mary's faith, who sat at Christ's feet weeping, washing them with her tears, and loving much, because much was forgiven."—*Shepard's Sound Believer*, p. 128, 129.

"You shall know godly sorrow (says Dr. Preston, in his discourse on Paul's conversion) by the continuance of it; it is constant; but worldly sorrow is but a passion of the mind; it changes, it lasts not. Though for the present it may be violent and strong, and work much outwardly; yet it comes but by fits, and continues not; like a land-flood, which violently, for the present, overflows the banks; but it will away again; it is not always thus. But godly sorrow is like a spring, that still keeps running both winter and summer, wet and dry, in heat and cold, early and late. So this godly sorrow is the same in a regenerate man still; take him when you will, he is still sorrowing for sin. This godly sorrow stands like the centre of the earth, which removes not, but still remains."

"I am persuaded, many a man's heart is kept from breaking and mourning, because of this. He saith (it may be) that he is a vile sinner; but I trust in Christ, &c. If they do go to Christ to destroy their sin, this makes them more secure in their sin. For (say they) I cannot help it, and Christ must do all. Whereas faith makes the soul mourn after the Lord the more."—*Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 168.

dear affections to some, and full of bitterness towards others. They are knit to their own party, those who approve, those who love, and admire them; but are fierce against those that oppose and dislike them. Matth. v. 45, 46. *Be like your father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?* Some show a great affection to their neighbours, and pretend to be ravished with the company of the children of God *abroad:* but at the same time are uncomfortable and churlish towards their near relations *at home*, and are very negligent of relative duties. And as to the great love to sinners and opposers of religion, and the great concern for their souls, that some express, even to extreme agony—singling out a particular person from among a multitude for its object—while at the same time there is no general compassion to sinners in equally miserable circumstances, but what is in a monstrous disproportion; this seems not to be of the nature of a gracious affection. Not that I suppose it to be at all strange, that pity to the perishing souls of sinners should be to a degree of agony, if other things are answerable; or that a truly gracious compassion to souls should be exercised much more to some persons than others who are equally miserable, especially on some particular occasions. Many things may happen to fix the mind, and affect the heart, with respect to a particular person, at such a juncture; and without doubt some saints have been in great distress for the souls of particular persons, so as to be, as it were, in travail for them. But when persons appear, at particular times, in agonies for the soul of some single person, far beyond what has been usual in eminent saints, but appear to be far inferior to them in a spirit of meek and fervent love, charity, and compassion to mankind in general; I say, such agonies are greatly to be suspected, because the Spirit of God is wont to give graces and gracious affections in a beautiful symmetry and proportion.

And as there is a monstrous disproportion in the love of some, in its exercises towards *different* persons, so there is in their seeming exercises of love towards the *same* persons. Some men show a love to others as to their outward man, they are liberal of their worldly substance, and often give to the poor; but have no love to, or concern for the *souls* of men. Others pretend a great love to men's souls, but are not compassionate and charitable towards their *bodies*. To make a great show of love, pity, and distress for souls, costs them nothing; but in order to show mercy to men's bodies, they must part with money. But a true Christian love to our brethren, extends both to their souls and bodies; and herein is like the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. He showed mercy to men's souls, by laboriously preaching the gospel to

them; and to their bodies, in going about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people. We have a remarkable instance of Christ's compassion at once both to men's souls and bodies, in Mark vi. 34, &c. *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.* Here was his compassion to their souls. And in the sequel, we have an account of his compassion to their bodies; he fed five thousand of them with five loaves and two fishes, because they had been a long while *having nothing to eat.* And if the compassion of professing Christians towards others does not work in the same ways, it is a sign that it is no true Christian compassion.

And furthermore, it is a sign that affections are not of the right sort, if persons seem to be much affected with the bad qualities of their fellow-Christians, (as the coldness and lifelessness of other saints,) but are in no proportion affected with their own defects and corruptions. A true Christian may be affected with the coldness and unsavouriness of other saints, and may mourn much over it: but at the same time, he is not so apt to be affected with the badness of any body's heart, as his own; this is most in his view; this he is most quick-sighted to discern, to see its aggravations, and to condemn. A lesser degree of virtue will bring him to pity himself, and be concerned at his own calamities, than is needful rightly to be affected with those of others; and if men have not attained to the less, we may determine they never attained to the greater.

And here by the way, I would observe, that it may be laid down as a general rule, That if persons pretend to high attainments in religion, who have never yet arrived to the lesser, it is a sign of a vain pretence. If persons pretend, that they have got beyond mere *morality*, to live a *spiritual* and *divine* life, but really have not come to be so much as *moral* persons: or pretend to be greatly affected with the wickedness of their hearts, and are not affected with the palpable violations of God's commands in their practice, which is a lesser attainment, their pretences are vain. If they pretend to be brought to be even willing to be damned for the glory of God, but have no forwardness to suffer a little in their estates and names, and worldly convenience, for the sake of their duty: or finally pretend that they are not afraid to venture their souls upon Christ, and commit their all to God, trusting to his bare word, and the faithfulness of his promises, for their eternal welfare; but at the same time, have not confidence enough in God, to dare to trust him with a little of their estates, bestowed to pious and charitable uses: I say, when it is thus with persons, their pretences are manifestly vain. He that is on a journey, and

imagines he has got far beyond such a place in his road, and never yet came to it, must be mistaken. He has not yet arrived at the *top* of the hill, who never yet got half-way thither. But this by the way.

What has been observed of the affections of *love*, is applicable also to *other* religious affections. Those that are true, extend in some proportion to their due and proper objects: but the false, are commonly strangely disproportionate. So it is with religious *desires* and longings; these in the saints, are towards those things that are spiritual and excellent in general, and in some proportion to their excellency, importance, or necessity, or the near concern they have in them: but in false longings, it is often far otherwise. They will strangely run, with impatient vehemence, after something of less importance, when other things of greater importance are neglected. Thus for instance, some persons are attended with a vehement inclination, an accountably violent pressure, to declare to others what they experience, and to exhort them, when there is at the same time no inclination, in any proportionable measure, to other things, to which true Christianity has as great, yea, a greater tendency; as pouring out the soul before God in secret, earnest prayer and praise to him, more conformity to him, living more to his glory, &c. We read in scripture of *groanings that cannot be uttered*, and *soul-breakings for the longing it hath*; and *longings*, *thirstings*, and *pantings*, much more frequently to these latter things, than the former.

And so as to *hatred* and *zeal*, when these are from right principles, they are against sin in general, in some proportion to the degree of sinfulness; Psal. cxix. 104. *I hate every false way.* So ver. 128. But a false hatred and zeal against sin, is against some particular sin only. Thus some seem to be very zealous against profaneness, and pride in apparel, who themselves are notorious for covetousness, closeness, and it may be backbiting, envy towards superiors, turbulency of spirit towards rulers, and rooted ill-will to those who have injured them. False zeal is against the sins of others; while he that has true zeal, exercises it chiefly against his own sins; though he shews also a proper zeal against prevailing and dangerous iniquity in others. Some pretend to have a great abhorrence of their own inward corruption; and yet make light of sins in practice, and seem to commit them without much restraint or remorse; though these imply sin, both in heart and life.

As there is a much greater disproportion in the exercises of false affections, than of true, as to different objects; so there is also, as to different *times*. For although true Christians are not always alike—yea, there is very great difference, at different times, and the best have reason to be greatly ashamed of their unsteadi-

ness—yet there is in no wise the instability and inconstancy of the false-hearted, in those who are true *virgins, that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.* The righteous man is truly said to be one *whose heart is fixed, trusting in God,* (Psal. cxii. 7.) and whose *heart is established with grace;* (Heb. xiii. 9.) Job xvii. 9. *The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.* It is spoken of as a note of the hypocrisy of the Jewish church, that they *were as a swift dromedary, traversing her ways.*

If therefore persons are religious only by fits and starts; if they now and then seem to be raised up to the clouds in their affections, and then suddenly fall down again, lose all, and become quite careless and carnal, and this is their manner of carrying on religion; if they appear greatly moved, and mightily engaged in religion, only in extraordinary seasons—as in the time of a remarkable out-pouring of the Spirit, or other uncommon dispensations of Providence, or upon the real or supposed receipt of some great mercy, &c.—but quickly return to such a frame, that their hearts are chiefly upon other things, and the prevailing stream of their affections is ordinarily towards the things of this world, they clearly evince their unsoundness. When they are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, who had their affections highly raised by what God had done for them at the Red sea, and sang his praise, and soon fell a lusting after the flesh-pots of Egypt; but then again when they came to Mount Sinai, and saw the great manifestations God made of himself there, seemed to be greatly engaged again, and mightily forward to enter into covenant with God, saying, *All that the Lord hath spoken, will we do, and be obedient,* but then quickly made them a golden calf; I say, when it is thus with persons, it is a sign of the unsoundness of affections‡. They are like the waters in the time of a shower

‡ Dr. Owen (on the Spirit, Book III. Chap. ii. § 18) speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "This work operates greatly on the affections; we have given instances, in fear, sorrow, joy, and delight, about spiritual things, that are stirred up and acted thereby; but yet it comes short in two things, of a thorough work upon the affections themselves. For, 1st, It doth not *fix* them. And 2dly, It doth not *fill* them. 1. It is required that our affections be fixed on heavenly and spiritual things: and true grace will effect it; Col. iii. 1, 2. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above.* The joys, the fears, the hopes, the sorrows, with reference to spiritual and eternal things, which the work before mentioned doth produce, are evanid, uncertain, unstable, not only as to the degrees, but as to the very being of them. Sometimes they are as a river ready to overflow its banks, men cannot but be pouring them out on all occasions; and sometimes as waters that fail, no drop comes from them. Sometimes they are hot, and sometimes cold: sometimes up, and sometimes down; sometimes all heaven, and sometimes all world; without equality, without stability. But true grace fixeth the affections on spiritual things. As to the degrees of their exercise, there may be, and is in them, a great variety, according as they may be excited, aided, assisted by grace and the means of it; or obstructed and impeded, by the interpo-

of rain, which, during the shower, and a little after, run like a brook, and flow abundantly, but are presently quite dry: and when another shower comes, they will flow again. Whereas a true saint is like a stream from a living spring; which though it may be greatly increased by a shower of rain, and diminished in time of drought, yet constantly runs: (John iv. 14. *The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up*, &c.) or like a tree planted by such a stream, that has a constant supply at the root, and is always green, even in time of the greatest drought; Jer. xvii. 7, 8. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* Many hypocrites are like comets, that appear for a while with a mighty blaze; but are very unsteady and irregular in their motion, (and are therefore called wandering stars, Jude 13;) their blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great while. But true saints are like the fixed stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are stedfast in their orb, and shine with a constant light. Hypocritical affections are like a violent motion; as that of the air moved with winds, (Jude 12.) But gracious affections are more a natural motion; like the stream of a river, which, though it has many turns, may meet with obstacles, and run more freely and swiftly in some places than others; yet in the general, with a steady and constant course, tends the same way, until it gets to the ocean.

And as there is a strange unevenness and disproportion in false affections, at different *times*; so there often is in different *places*. Some are greatly affected when in company; but have nothing that bears any manner of proportion to it in secret, in close meditation, prayer and conversing with God when alone, and separa-

sition of temptations and diversions. But the constant bent and inclination of renewed affections, is unto spiritual things; as the scripture every where testifieth, and as experience doth confirm."

"There is (says Dr. Preston) a certain love, by fits, which God accepts not; when men come and offer to God great promises, like the waves of the sea, as big as mountains: Oh, they think, they will do much for God! But their minds change; and they become as those high waves, which at last fall level with the other waters. If a man should proffer thee great kindnesses, and thou shouldst afterwards come to him to make use of him, and he should look strangely upon thee, as if he were never acquainted with thee, how wouldst thou esteem of such love? If we are now on, now off, in our love, God will not esteem of such love." *Discourse on the divine love of Christ.*

Mr. Flavel, speaking of these changeable professors, says, "These professors have more of the moon than of the sun; little light, less heat, and many changes. They deceive many, yea, they deceive themselves, but cannot deceive God. They want that ballast and establishment in themselves, that would have kept them light and steady." *Touchstone of Sincerity*, chap. ii. § 2.

ted from all the world†. A true Christian doubtless delights in religious fellowship and Christian conversation, and finds much to affect his heart in it; but he also delights at times to retire from all mankind, to converse with God in solitude. And this also has its peculiar advantages for fixing his heart, and engaging his affections. True religion disposes persons to be much alone in solitary places, for holy meditation and prayer. So it wrought in Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 63. And which is much more, so it wrought in Jesus Christ. How often do we read of his retiring into mountains and solitary places, for holy converse with his Father? It is difficult to conceal great affections, but yet gracious affections are of a much more silent and secret nature, than those that are counterfeit. So it is with gracious *sorrow* of the saints for their *own* sins‡. Thus the future gracious mourning of true penitents, at the beginning of the latter-day glory, is represented as being so secret, as to be hidden from the companions of their bosom; Zech. xii. 12, 13, 14. *And the land shall mourn every family apart: the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart: the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart: all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.* So it is with their sorrow for the sins of *others*. The saints' pains and travail for the souls of sinners is chiefly in secret places; Jer. xiii. 17. *If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.* So it is with gracious *joys:* they are *hidden manna*, in this respect, as well as others, Rev. ii. 17. The Psalmist seems to speak of his sweetest comforts, as those which he had in secret; Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow*

† "The Lord is neglected secretly, yet honoured openly; because there is no wind in their chambers to blow their sails; and therefore they shall stand still. Hence many men keep their profession, when they lose their affection. They have by the one a name to live, (and that is enough,) though their hearts be dead. And hence so long as you love and commend them, so long they love you; but if not, they will forsake you. They were warm only by another's fire, and hence having no principle of life within, soon grow dead. This is the water that turns a Pharisee's mill." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 180.

"The hypocrite (says Mr. Flavel) is not for the closet, but the synagogue, Matth. vi. 5, 6. It is not his meat and drink to retire from the clamour of the world, to enjoy God in secret." *Touchstone of Sincerity*, chap. vii. § 2.

Dr. Ames, in his Cases of Conscience, Lib. III. Chap. v. speaks of it as a thing by which sincerity may be known; "That persons be obedient in the absence, as well as in the presence of lookers on; in secret, yea more than in public;" alledging Phil. ii. 12. and Matth. vi. 6.

‡ Mr. Flavel, in reckoning up those things, wherein the sorrow of saints is distinguished from the sorrow of hypocrites, about their sins, says, "Their troubles for sin are more private and silent troubles than others are; their sore runs in the night." *Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. vi. § 5.

by: if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The most that the saints have in this world, is but a taste, a prelibation of that future glory which is their proper fulness; it is only an earnest of their future inheritance; (Cor. i. 22. and v. 5. and Eph. i. 14.) The most eminent saints in this state are but children, compared with their future, which is their proper state of maturity and perfection; as the apostle observes, 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11. The greatest eminence and perfection that the saints arrive at in this world, has no tendency to satiety, or to abate their desires after more; but, on the contrary, makes them more eager to press forwards; as is evident by the apostle's words, Phil. iii. 13—15. *Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark.—Let us therefore, as many as be* PERFECT, *be thus minded.*

The reasons of it are, that the more persons have of holy affections, the more they have of that spiritual taste which I have spoken of elsewhere; whereby they perceive the excellency, and relish the divine sweetness of holiness. And the more grace they have, while in this state of imperfection, the more they see their imperfection and emptiness, and distance from what ought to be; and so the more do they see their need of grace; as I shewed at large before, when speaking of the nature of evangelical humiliation. And besides, grace, as long as it is imperfect, is of a growing nature, and in a growing state. And we see it to be so with all living things, that while they are in a state of imperfection, and in their growing state, their nature seeks after growth; and so much the more, as they are more healthy and prosperous. Therefore the cry of every true grace, is like that cry of true faith, Mark ix. 24. *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* And the greater spiritual discoveries and affections the true Christian has, the more does he become an earnest supplicant for grace, and spiritual food, that he may grow; and the more earnestly does he pursue after it, in the use of proper means and endeavours: for true and gracious longings after holiness, are no idle ineffectual desires.

But here some may object, How is this consistent with what all allow, that spiritual enjoyments are of a soul-satisfying nature?

I answer, Its being so will appear to be not at all inconsistent with what has been said, if it be considered in what manner spiritual enjoyments are said to be of a soul-satisfying nature. Certainly they are not of a cloying nature, so that he who has any thing of them, though but in a very imperfect degree, desires no more. But spiritual enjoyments are of a soul-satisfying nature in the following respects. 1. They in their kind and na-

ture, are fully adapted to the nature, capacity and need of the soul of man. So that those who find them, desire *no other kind* of enjoyments; they sit down fully contented with that kind of happiness which they have, desiring no change, nor inclining to wander about any more, saying, *Who will shew us any good?* the soul is never cloyed, never weary; but perpetually giving up itself, with all its powers, to this happiness. But not that those who have something of this happiness, desire no more of the same. 2. They are satisfying also in this respect, that they answer the expectation of the appetite. When the appetite is high to any thing, the expectation is consequently so. Appetite to a particular object, implies expectation in its nature. This expectation is not satisfied by worldly enjoyments, the man expected to have a great accession of happiness, but he is disappointed. But it is not so with spiritual enjoyments; they fully answer and satisfy the expectation. 3. The gratification and pleasures of spiritual enjoyments is permanent. It is not so with worldly enjoyments. They in a sense satisfy particular appetites: but the appetite in being satisfied, is glutted, and then the pleasure is over: and as soon as that is over, the general appetite of human nature after happiness returns; but is empty, and without any thing to satisfy it. So that the glutting of a particular appetite, does but take away from, and leave empty, the general thirst of nature. 4. Spiritual good is satisfying, as there is enough in it to satisfy the soul, as to degree, if obstacles were but removed, and the enjoying faculty duly applied. There is room enough here for the soul to extend itself; here is an infinite ocean. If men be not satisfied here, as to degree of happiness, the cause is with themselves; it is because they do not open their mouths wide enough.

But these things do not argue that a soul has no appetite excited after more of the same, when it has tasted a little; or that the appetite will not increase, until it comes to fulness of enjoyment: as bodies attracted to the earth, tend to it more strongly, the nearer they come to the attracting body, and are not at rest out of the centre. Spiritual good is of a satisfying nature; and for that very reason, the soul that tastes, and knows its nature, will thirst after it, and a fulness of it, that it may be satisfied. And the more one experiences, and knows this excellent, unparalleled, exquisite, and satisfying sweetness, the more earnestly will he hunger and thirst for more, until he comes to perfection. And therefore this is the nature of spiritual affections, that the greater they be, the greater the appetite and longing is, after grace and holiness.

But with those joys, and other religious affections, that are false and counterfeit, it is otherwise. If before there was a great desire, of some sort, after grace; as these affections rise, *that*

desire ceases, or is abated. It may be before, while the man was under legal convictions, and much afraid of hell, he earnestly longed that he might obtain spiritual light in his understanding, faith in Christ, and love to God: but now, when these false affections deceive him, and make him confident that he is converted, and his state good, there are no more earnest longings after light and grace; for his end is answered; he is confident that his sins are forgiven him, and that he shall go to heaven; and so he is satisfied. And especially when false affections are raised very high, do they put an end to longings after grace and holiness. The man now is far from appearing to himself a poor empty creature; on the contrary, he is rich, and increased with goods, and hardly conceives of any thing more excellent, than what he has already attained.

Hence there is an end to many persons' earnestness in seeking, after they have once obtained that which they call their conversion; or at least, after they have had those high affections, that make them fully confident of it. Before, while they looked upon themselves as in a state of nature, they were engaged in seeking after God and Christ, and cried earnestly for grace, and strove in the use of means: but now they act as though they thought their work was done; they live upon their first work, or some high past experiences; and there is an end to their crying, and striving after God and grace*. Whereas the holy principles that actuate

* "It is usual to see a false heart most diligent in seeking the Lord, when he has been worst, and most careless when it is best. Hence many at first conversion, sought the Lord earnestly; afterwards affections and endeavours die; that now they are as good as the word can make them.—An hypocrite's last end is to satisfy himself: hence he has enough. A saint's is to satisfy Christ; hence he never has enough." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 157.

"Many a man, it may be, may say, I have nothing in myself, and all is in Christ: and comfort himself there; and so falls asleep. Hands off! and touch not this ark, lest the Lord slay thee: a Christ of clouts would serve your turn as well."—*Ibid.* p. 71.

"An hypocrite's light goes out, and grows not. Hence many ancient slanders take all their comfort from their first work, and droop when in old age." *Ibid.* p. 77.

And p. 93, 94. Mr. Shepard, mentioning the characters of those that have a dead hope, says, "They that content themselves with any measure of holiness and grace, they look not for Christ's coming and company. For saints that do look for him, though they have not that holiness and grace they would have, yet they rest not satisfied with any measure; 1 John iii. 3. *He that hath this hope, purifieth himself as he is pure.*—The saints content not themselves with any dressings, until made glorious, and so fit for fellowship with that spouse—When a man leaves not until he gets such a measure of faith and grace, and now when he has got this, contents himself with this, as a good sign that he shall be saved, he looks not for Christ. Or when men are heavily laden with sin, then close with Christ; and then are comforted, sealed, and have joy that fills them; and now the work is done.—And when men shall not content themselves with any measure, but wish they had more, if grace would grow, while they tell clocks and sit idle; and as God must do all; but do not purge themselves, and make work of it."

Again, p. 109. "There is never a hypocrite living, but closeth with Christ for

a true saint, have a far more powerful influence to stir him up to earnestness in seeking God and holiness, than servile fear. Hence seeking God is spoken of as one of the distinguishing characters of the saints; and *those that seek God*, is one of the names by which the godly are called in scripture; Psal. xxiv. 6. *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.* Psal. lxix. 6. *Let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake.* ver. 32. *The humble shall see this, and be glad; and your heart shall live that seek God.* And lxx. 4. *Let all those that seek thee, rejoice, and be glad in thee; and let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.* And the scriptures every where represent the seeking, striving and labour of a Christian, as being chiefly *after* his conversion, and his conversion as being but the beginning of his work. And almost all that is said in the New Testament, of men's watching, giving earnest heed to themselves, running the race that is set before them, striving and agonizing, wrestling not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, fighting, putting on the whole armour of God, and standing, having done all to stand, pressing forward, reaching forth, continuing instant in prayer, crying to God day and night; I say, almost all that is said in the New Testament of these things, is spoken of, and directed to the saints. Where these things are applied to sinners seeking conversion once, they are spoken of the saints' prosecution of the great business of their high calling ten times. But many in these days have got into a strange anti-scriptural way, of having all their

his own ends; for he cannot work beyond his principle. Now when men have served their own turns out of another man, away they go, and keep that which they have. An hypocrite closeth with Christ, as a man with a rich shop; he will not be at cost to buy all the shop, but so much as serves his turn. Commonly men in horror, seek so much of Christ as will ease them; and hence profess, and hence seek for so much of Christ as will credit them; and hence their desires after Christ are soon satisfied. *Appetitus finis est infinitus.*"

Wo to thee that canst paint such a Christ in thy head, and receive such a Christ into thy heart, as must be a pander to your sloth. The Lord will revenge this wrong done to his glory, with greater sorrows than ever any felt; to make Christ not only meat and drink to feed, but clothes to cover your sloth—Why what can we do? what can we do?—Why as the first Adam conveys not only guilt, but power, so the second conveys both righteousness and strength."—*Ibid.* p. 158.

"When the Lord hath given some light and affection, and some comfort and some reformation, now a man grows full here. Saints do for God; and carnal hearts do something too; but a little fills them, and quiets them, and so damns them. And hence men at the first work upon them, are very diligent in the use of means; but after that, they be brought to neglect prayer, sleep out sermons, and to be careless, sapless, lifeless."—*Ibid* p. 210.

"It is an argument of want of grace, when a man saith to himself, as the glutton said to his soul, "Take thy rest, for thou hast goods laid up for many years. So thou hast repentance and grace, and peace enough *for many years:* and hence the soul takes its rest, grows sluggish and negligent. Oh, if you die in this case, this night thy soul will be taken away to hell."—*Ibid.* p. 227.

striving and wrestling over *before* they are converted; and so having an easy time of it afterwards, to sit down and enjoy their sloth and indolence; as those that now have a supply of their wants, and are become rich and full. But when the Lord *fills the hungry with good things, these rich* are like to be *sent away empty*. Luke i. 53.

But doubtless there are some hypocrites, that have only false affections, who will think they are able to stand this trial; and will readily say, that they desire not to rest satisfied with past attainments, but to be pressing forward; they desire more, they long after God and Christ, desire more holiness, and seek it.—But the truth is, their desires are not properly the desires of appetite after holiness, for its own sake, or for its moral excellency and holy sweetness; but only for by-ends. They long after clearer discoveries, that they may be better satisfied about the state of their souls; or because in great discoveries self is gratified, in being made so much of by God, and so exalted above others; they long to *taste* the love of God, (as they call it) rather than to have *more* love to God. Or, it may be, they have a kind of forced, fancied or made longings; because they think they must long for more grace, otherwise it will be a dark sign upon them. But such things as these are far different from the natural, and as it were necessary appetite and thirsting of the new man after God and holiness. There is an inward burning desire that a saint has after holiness, as natural to the new creature, as vital heat is to the body. There is a holy breathing and panting after the Spirit of God to increase holiness, as natural to a holy nature, as breathing is to a living body. And holiness or sanctification is more directly the object of it, than any manifestation of God's love and favour. This is the meat and drink that is the object of the spiritual appetite; John iv. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* Where we read in scripture of the desires, longings and thirstings of the saints, righteousness and God's laws are much more frequently mentioned, as the object of them, than any thing else. The saints *desire the sincere milk of the word*, not so much to testify God's love to them, as *that they may grow thereby* in holiness. I have shewn before, that holiness is that good which is the immediate object of a spiritual taste. But undoubtedly the same sweetness that is the chief object of a spiritual taste, is also the chief object of a spiritual appetite. Grace is the godly man's treasure; Is. xxxiii. 6. *The fear of the Lord is his treasure.* Godliness is the gain of which he is covetous, 1 Tim. vi. 6. Hypocrites long for discoveries, more for the present comfort of the discovery, and the high manifestation of God's love in it, than for any sanctifying influence of it. But neither a longing after great discoveries, or after great

tastes of the love of God, nor longing to be in heaven, nor longing to die, are in any measure so distinguishing marks of true saints, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.

SECT. XII.

Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.

I mean, they have that influence and power upon him who is the subject of them, that they cause that a practice, which is universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules, should be the practice and business of his life.

This implies three things; 1. That his behaviour or practice in the world, be universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules. 2. That he makes a business of such a holy practice above all things; that it be a business which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and pursues with highest earnestness and diligence: so that he may be said to make this practice of religion eminently *his work and business.* And 3. That he persists in it to the end of life: so that it may be said, not only to be his business at certain seasons, the business of Sabbath-days, or certain extraordinary times, or the business of a month, or a year, or of seven years, or his business under certain circumstances; but the *business of his life;* it being that business which he perseveres in through all changes, and under all trials, as long as he lives. The necessity of each of these, in all true Christians, is most clearly and fully taught in the word of God.

1. It is necessary that men should be universally obedient*:

* "He that pretends to godliness, and turns aside to crooked ways, is an hypocrite; for those that are really godly, do live in a way of obedience; Psal. cxix. 1, 2, 3. 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the law of the Lord. They also do no iniquity.' Luke i. 6. 'They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.' But such as live in ways of sin, are dissemblers: for all such will be rejected in the day of judgment; Matth. vii. 23. 'Depart from me ye that work iniquity.' The like we have, Luke xiii. 27. If men live in a way of disobedience, they do not love God: for love will make men keep God's commandments; 1 John v. 3. "Herein is love, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." If men live in a way of disobedience, they have not a spirit of faith; for faith sanctifies men: Acts xxvi. 18. "Sanctified by faith that is in me." If men live in a way of disobedience, they are not Christ's sheep; for his sheep hear his voice; John x. 27. Men that live in a way of disobedience, are not born of God; 1 John iii. 9. "He that is born of God, sinneth not." Men that live in a way of disobedience are the servants of sin; John viii. 34. "He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin."—A course of external sin is an evidence of hypocrisy; whether it be a sin of omission or commission.—If men live in the neglect of known duties, or in the practice of known evils, that will be their condemnation; let the

1 John iii. 3, &c. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither know him.—He that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that committeth sin, is of the devil.* Chap. v. 8. *We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.* John xv. 14. *Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.* James ii. 10. *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* 1 Cor. vi. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Gal. v. 19, 20. *Now the works of the flesh*

sin be what it will; let it be profaneness, uncleanness, lying, or injustice.—If men allow themselves in malice, envy, wanton thoughts, profane thoughts, that will condemn them; though those corruptions do not break out in any scandalous way. These thoughts are an evidence of a rotten heart, Tit. iii. 3. "We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." If a man allows himself, though he thinks he doth not, in malice and envy, he is an hypocrite; though his conscience disallows it, yet if his heart allows it, he is no saint.—Some make pretences to godliness, whereby they do not only deceive others, but, (which is a great deal worse) deceive themselves also; but this will condemn them, that they live in a course of sin, and so must go with ungodly men: Psal. cxxv. 5. "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." If there be a great change in a man's carriage, and he be reformed in several particulars, yet if there be one evil way, the man is an ungodly man; where there is piety there is universal obedience. A man may have great infirmities, yet be a godly man. So it was with Lot, David, and Peter; but if he lives in a way of sin, he does not render his godliness only suspicious, but it is full evidence against him. Men that are godly have respect to all God's commandments, Psal. cxix. 6. There be a great many commands, and if there be one of them that a man has not respect unto, he will be put to shame another day. If a man lives in one evil way, he is not subject to God's authority; but then he lives in rebellion; and that will take off all his pleas, and at once cut off all his pretences; and he will be condemned in the day of judgment. One way of sin is exception enough against the man's salvation. Though the sin that he lives in be but small, such persons will not be guilty of perjury, stealing, drunkenness, fornication; they look upon them to be heinous things, and they are afraid of them; but they do not much matter it, if they oppress a little in a bargain, if they command a thing too much when they are about to sell it, if they break a promise, if they spend the Sabbath unprofitably, if they neglect secret prayer, if they talk rashly and reproach others; they think these are but small things; if they can keep clear of great transgressions, they hope that God will not insist upon small things. But indeed all the commands of God are established by divine authority; a small shot may kill a man, as well as a cannon bullet: a small leak may sink a ship. If a man lives in small sins, that shews he has no love to God, no sincere care to please and honour God. Little sins are of a damning nature, as well as great; if they do not deserve so much punishment as greater, yet they do deserve damnation. There is a contempt of God in all sins; Matth. v. 19. "He that shall break one of the least of these commands, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of God." Prov. xix. 16. "He that keepeth the commandments, keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his way, shall die." If a man says, this is a great command, and so lays weight on it, and another is a little commandment, and so does not regard it, but will allow himself to break it, he is in a perishing condition."—(Stoddard's Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy.)

are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Which is as much as to say, that they that do any sort of wickedness. Job xxxi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands, &c.* Ezek. xxxiii. 15. *If he walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live.* If one member only be corrupt, and we do not cut it off, it will carry the whole body to hell, Matth. v. 29, 30. Saul was commanded to slay all God's enemies, the Amalekites; and he slew all but Agag, and the saving him alive proved his ruin. Caleb and Joshua entered into God's promised rest, because they *wholly* followed the Lord, (Numb. xiv. 24, and xxxii. 11, 12, Deut. i. 36. Josh. xiv. 6, 8, 9, 14.) Naaman's hypocrisy appeared in that—however he seemed to be greatly affected with gratitude to God for healing his leprosy, and engaged to serve him, yet—in one thing he desired to be excused. And Herod, though he feared John, observed him, heard him gladly, and did many things; yet was condemned, in that in one thing he would not hearken to him, even in parting with his beloved Herodias. So that it is necessary that men should part with their dearest iniquities, which are as their right hand and right eyes; sins that most easily beset them, and to which they are most exposed by their natural inclinations, evil customs, or particular circumstances, as well as others. As Joseph would not make known himself to his brethren who had sold him, until Benjamin the beloved child of the family was delivered up; no more will Christ reveal his love to us, until we part with our dearest lusts, and until we are brought to comply with the most difficult duties, and those to which we have the greatest aversion.

And it is of importance to observe, that in order to a man's being universally obedient, his obedience must not only consist in *negatives*, or in universally avoiding wicked practices; but he must also be universal in the *positives* of religion. Sins of omission are as much breaches of God's commands, as sins of commission. Christ, in Matth. xxv. represents those on the left hand, as being condemned and cursed to everlasting fire, for sins of omission, *I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat, &c.* A man therefore cannot be said to be universally obedient, and of a Christian conversation, only because he is no thief, oppressor,

fraudulent person, drunkard, tavern-haunter, whore-master, rioter, night-walker, nor unclean, profane in his language, slanderer, liar, furious, malicious, nor reviler. He is falsely said to be of a conversation becoming the gospel, who goes thus far, and no farther; but, in order to this, it is necessary that he should also be of a serious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, respectful, condescending, benevolent, merciful, charitable and beneficent walk and conversation. Without such things as these, he does not obey the laws of Christ, laws that he and his apostles abundantly insist on, as of greatest importance and necessity.

2. In order to men's being true Christians, it is necessary that they prosecute the business of religion, and the service of God, with great earnestness and diligence, as the work to which they devote themselves, and make the main business of their lives. All Christ's *peculiar people*, not only do good works, but are *zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. No man can do the service of two masters at once. They who are God's true servants, give up themselves to his service, and make it as it were their whole work, therein employing their whole hearts, and the chief of their strength; Phil. iii. 13. *This one thing I do.* Christians in their effectual calling, are not called to idleness, but to labour in God's vineyard, and spend their day in doing a great laborious service. All true Christians comply with this call, (as is implied in its being an effectual call), and do the work of Christians; which is every where in the New Testament compared to those exercises, wherein men are wont to exert their strength with the greatest earnestness, as running, wrestling, fighting. All true Christians are good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, and *fight the good fight of faith:* for none but those who do so, ever *lay hold on eternal life.* Those who *fight as those who beat the air*, never win the crown of victory. *They that run in a race, run all: but one wins the prize;* and they that are slack and negligent in their course, do not *so run, as that they may obtain.* The kingdom of heaven is not to be taken but by violence. Without earnestness there is no getting along in that narrow way that leads to life; and so no arriving at that state of glorious life and happiness to which it leads. Without earnest labour, there is no ascending the steep and high hill of Zion; and so no arriving at the heavenly city on the top of it. Without a constant laboriousness, there is no stemming the swift stream in which we swim, so as ever to come to that fountain of water of life, that is at the head of it. There is need that we should *watch and pray always*, in order to our *escaping those* dreadful *things* that are coming on the ungodly, and our *being counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.* There is need of our *putting on the whole armour of God*,

and doing all to stand, in order to our avoiding a total overthrow, and being utterly destroyed by the *fiery darts of the devil*. There is need that we should *forget the things that are behind*, and *be reaching forth to the things that are before, and pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord*, in order to our obtaining that prize. Slothfulness in the service of God, in his professed servants, is as damning, as open rebellion: for the *slothful servant*, is a *wicked servant*, and shall be cast into outer darkness, among God's open enemies, Matth. xxv. 26, 30. They that are *slothful*, are not *followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises;* Heb. vi. 11, 12. *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* And all they who follow *that cloud of witnesses* who are gone before to heaven, do *lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets them, and run with patience the race that is set before them*, Heb. xii. 1. That true faith by which persons rely on the righteousness of Christ and the work he hath done for them, and truly feed and live upon him, is evermore accompanied with a spirit of earnestness in the Christian work and course. Which was typified of old, by the manner of the children of Israel's feeding on the paschal lamb; Exod. xii. 12. *And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover.*

2. Every true Christian perseveres in this way of universal obedience, diligent and earnest service of God, through all the various kinds of trials that he meets with, to the end of life. That all true saints, all who obtain eternal life, do thus persevere in the practice of religion, and the service of God, is a doctrine so abundantly taught in the scripture, that particularly to rehearse all the texts which imply it would be endless. I shall content myself with referring to some in the margin*.

But *that* in persevering obedience, which is chiefly insisted on in the scripture, as a special note of the truth of grace, is the continuance of professors in the practice of their duty, and being stedfast in an holy walk, through the various *trials* that they meet with.

By *trials* here I mean, those things which a professor meets

* Deut. v. 29. Deut. xxxii. 18, 19, 20. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psal. lxxviii. 7, 8, 10, 11, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 56, &c. Psal. cvi. 3, 12—15. Psal. cxxv. 4, 5. Prov. xxvi. 11. Is. lxiv. 5. Jer. xvii. 13. Ezek. iii. 20. and xviii. 24. and xxxiii. 12, 13. Matth. x. 22. and xiii. 4—8. with verses 19—23. and xxv. 8. and xxiv. 12, 13. Luke ix. 62. and xii. 35, &c. and xxii. 28. and xvii. 32. John viii. 30, 31. and xv. 6, 7, 8, 10, 16. Rom. ii. 7. and xi. 22. Col. i. 22, 23. Heb. iii. 6, 12, 14. and vi. 11, 12. and x. 35, &c. James i. 25. Rev. ii. 13, 26. and ii. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 4—8.

with in his course, that especially render his continuance in duty, and faithfulness to God, difficult to nature. These things are called in scripture by the name of *trials*, or *temptations*, which are words of the same signification. These are of various kinds; there are many things that render continuance in the way of duty difficult, by their tendency to cherish and foment, or to stir up and provoke lusts and corruptions. Many things make it hard to continue in the way of duty, by their being of an alluring nature, and having a tendency to entice persons to sin; or by their tendency to take off restraints, and embolden them in iniquity. Other things are trials of the soundness and stedfastness of professors, by their tendency to make their duty appear terrible to them, and so to drive them from it: such as the sufferings to which their duty will expose them; pain, ill-will, contempt, and reproach, or loss of outward possessions and comforts. If persons, after they have made a profession of religion, live any considerable time in this world, which is so full of changes, and so full of evil, it cannot be otherwise, than that they should meet with many trials of their sincerity and stedfastness. And besides, it is God's providential manner, to bring trials on his professing friends and servants designedly, that he may manifest them; and may exhibit sufficient matter of conviction of the state in which they are to their own consciences, and oftentimes, to the world. This appears by innumerable scriptures; some are referred to in the margin*.

True saints may be guilty of some kinds and degrees of backsliding, may be foiled by particular temptations, and fall into sin, yea, great sins, but they can never fall away so as to grow weary of religion and the service of God, and habitually to dislike and neglect it, either on its own account, or on account of the difficulties that attend it; as is evident by Gal. vi. 9. Rom. ii. 7. Heb. x. 36. Is. xliii. 22. Mal. i. 13. They can never backslide so as to continue no longer in a *way* of universal obedience; or so, that it shall cease to be their *manner* to observe all the rules of Christianity, and do all duties required, even the most difficult, and in the most difficult circumstances†. This is abundantly

* Gen. xxii. 1. Exod. xv. 25. and xvi. 4. Deut. viii. 2, 15, 16. and xiii. 3. Jud. ii. 22. and iii. 1, 4. Job xxiii. 10. Psal. lxvi. 10, 11. Ezek. iii. 20. Dan. xii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. Matth. viii. 19, 20. and xvni. 21, 22. Luke i. 35. 1 Cor. xi. 19. 2 Cor. viii. 8. Jam. i. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 12. 1 John ii. 19. Heb. xi. 17. Rev. iii. 10.

† "One way of sin is exception enough against men's salvation, though their temptations be great. Some persons delight in iniquity; they take pleasure in rudeness, and intemperate practices; but there be others, that do not delight in sin; when they can handsomely avoid it, they do not choose it; except they be under some great necessity, they will not do it. They are afraid to sin; they think it is dangerous, and have some care to avoid it: but sometimes they force themselves to sin; they are reduced to difficulties, and cannot tell how well to avoid it:

manifest by the things observed already. Nor can they ever fall away, so as habitually to be more engaged in other things, than in the business of religion: or so that it should become their way and manner to serve something else more than God; or so as statedly to cease to serve God, with such earnestness and diligence, as still to be habitually devoted and given up to the business of religion; unless those words of Christ can fall to the ground, *Ye cannot serve two masters;* and those of the apostle, *He that will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God;* and unless a saint can change his God, and yet be a true saint. Nor can a true saint ever fall away so, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference in his walk and behaviour since his conversion, from what was before. They who are truly converted are new men, new creatures; new, not only within, but without; they are sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul and body; old things are passed away, all things are become new. They have new hearts, new eyes, new ears, new tongues, new hands, new feet; i. e. a new conversation and practice; they walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of life. And they that fall away, shew visibly that they never were risen with Christ*. And especially when men's opinion of their being converted, and so in a safe estate, is the very cause of their failure, it is a most evident sign of their hypocrisy†. And this is the case, whether their

it is a dangerous thing not to do it. If Naaman do not bow himself in the house of Rimmon, the king will be in a rage with him, take away his office, it may be, take away his life, and so he complies; 2 Kings v. 18.—So Jeroboam forced himself to set up the calves at Dan and Bethel; he thought that if the people went up to Jerusalem to worship, they would return to Rehoboam, and kill him: therefore he must think of some expedient to deliver himself in this strait: 1 Kings xii. 27, 28. He was driven by appearing necessity to take this wicked course. So the stony-ground hearers were willing to retain the profession of the true religion; but the case was such, that they thought they could not well do it; Matth. xiii. 21.—'When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. So Achan and Gehazi had singular opportunities to get an estate; if they live twenty years they are not like to have such an advantage; and they force themselves to borrow a point, and break the law of God. They lay a necessity on estate, and liberty, and life, but not upon obedience. If a man be willing to serve God in ordinary cases, but excuse himself when there be great difficulties, he is not godly. It is a small matter to serve God when men have no temptation; but Lot was holy in Sodom, Noah was righteous in the old world. Temptations try men, but they do not force men to sin; and grace will establish the heart in a day of temptation. They are blessed that do endure temptation. James i. 12. But they are cursed that fall away in a day of temptation." (Stoddard's Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy.)

* "Hence we learn what verdict to pass and give in concerning those men that decay and fall off from the Lord. They never had oil in the vessel; never had a dram of grace in their heart. Thus 1 John ii. 19. "If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." It seems they were such men, which were so eminent and excellent, as that there were no brands nor marks upon them, to give notice to the churches, that they were marked out for apostacy; but were only discovered to be unsound, by their apostacy; and this was argument good enough." Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 226.

† "When a man's rising is the cause of his fall, or seals a man up in his fall, or

falling away be into their former sins, or into some new kind of wickedness, having the corruption of nature only turned into a new channel, instead of its being mortified. As when persons that think themselves converted, though they do not return to former profaneness and lewdness; yet from the high opinion they have of their experiences, graces, and privileges, gradually settle more and more in a self-righteous and spiritually proud temper of mind, and in such a manner of behaviour and conversation, as naturally arises therefrom. When it is thus with men, however far they may seem to be from their former evil practices, this alone is enough to condemn them, and may render their last state far worse than the first. For this seems to be the very case of the Jews of that generation of whom Christ speaks, Matth. xii. 43—45. They had been awakened by John the Baptist's preaching, and brought to a reformation of their former licentious courses, whereby the unclean spirit was as it were turned out, and the house swept and garnished; yet being *empty* of God and of grace, full of themselves, and exalted in an exceeding high opinion of their own righteousness and eminent holiness, they became habituated to an answerably self-exalting behaviour. They changed the sins of publicans and harlots, for those of the Pharisees; and in the issue, had seven devils worse than the first.

Thus I have explained what exercise and fruit I mean, when I say, that gracious affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice. The reason why gracious affections have such a tendency and effect, appears from many things that have already been observed in the preceding parts of this discourse.

The reason of it appears particularly from this, that *gracious affections arise from those operations and influences which are spiritual*, and that the inward principle from whence they flow, is something *divine*, a communication of God, a participation of the divine nature, Christ living in the heart, the holy Spirit dwelling there, in union with the faculties of the soul, as an internal vital principle, exerting his own proper nature in the exercise of those faculties. This is sufficient to shew us why true grace should

at least the cause through his corruption. Ex. Gr. Time was, a man lived a loose, careless, carnal life; by the ministry of some word, or reading of some book, or speaking with some friend, he comes to be convinced of his misery and woful condition, and sees no good nor grace himself; he hath been even hitherto deceived: at last he comes to get some light, some taste, some sorrows, some heart to use the means, some comfort, and mercy, and hope of life: and when it is thus with him, now he falls; he grows full and falls; and this rising is the cause of his fall; his light is darkness and death to him; and grows to a form of knowledge; his rising makes him fall to formality, and then to profaneness; and so his tasting satisfies him; his sorrows empty his heart of sorrows for sin; and his sorrows for his falls harden his heart in his falls; and all the means of recovering him harden him.—Look as it is in diseases; if the physic and meat turn to be poison, then there is no hope of recovery; a man is sick to death now. The saint's little measures makes him forget what is behind.' Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 226.

have such activity, power and efficacy. No wonder that what is divine, is powerful and effectual; for it has omnipotence on its side. If God dwells in the heart, and be vitally united to it, he will shew that he is a God by the efficacy of his operation. Christ is not in the heart of a saint as in a sepulchre, as a dead saviour that does nothing; but as in his temple, one that is alive from the dead. For in the heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life, that he received at his resurrection. Thus every saint who is the subject of the benefit of Christ's sufferings, is made to know and experience the power of his resurrection. The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate spring of grace in the heart, is all life, all power, all act; 2 Cor. ii. 4.—*In demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.* 1 Thess. i. 5. *Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.*—1 Cor. iv. 20. *The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.* Hence saving affections, though oftentimes they do not make so great a noise and show as others; yet have in them a secret solidity, life and strength, whereby they take hold of, and carry away the heart, leading it into a kind of captivity, 2 Cor. x. 5. gaining a full and stedfast determination of the will for God and holiness, Psal. cx. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* And thus it is that holy affections have a governing power in the course of a man's life. A statue may look very much like a real man, and a beautiful man; yea it may have, in its appearance to the eye, the resemblance of a very lively, strong and active man: but yet an inward principle of life and strength is wanting; and therefore it does nothing, it brings nothing to pass, there is no action or operation to answer the shew. False discoveries and affections do not go deep enough, to reach and govern the spring of men's actions and practice. The seed in the stony ground had not deepness of earth; the root did not go deep enough to bring forth fruit. But gracious affections go to the very bottom of the heart, and take hold of the very inmost springs of life and activity. Herein chiefly appears the power of true godliness, viz. in its being effectual in practice. And the efficacy of godliness in this respect, is what the apostle respects, when he speaks of the power of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5. for he there is particularly declaring, how some professors of religion would notoriously fail in the practice of it, and then in the 5th verse observes, that in being thus of an unholy practice, they deny the *power* of godliness, though they have the *form* of it. Indeed the power of godliness is exerted in the first place *within* the soul; in the sensible, lively exercise of gracious affections there. Yet the principal *evidence* of this power is in those exercises of holy affections that are practical; conquering the will, the lusts, and corruptions of

men, and carrying them on in the way of holiness, through all temptation, difficulty and opposition.

Again, the reason why gracious affections have their exercise and effect in Christian practice, appears from this, that *the first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves, and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or self-interest.* This shews why holy affections will cause men to be holy in their practice universally. What makes men partial in religion is, that they seek themselves, and not God, in their religion, and close with religion, not for its own excellent nature, but only to serve a turn. He that closes with religion only to serve a turn, will close with no more of it than he imagines serves that turn: but he that closes with religion for its own excellent and lovely nature, closes with all that has that nature: he that embraces religion for its own sake, embraces the whole of religion. This also shews why gracious affections will cause men to practice religion perseveringly, and at all times. Religion may alter greatly in process of time, as to its consistence with men's private interest, in many respects; and therefore he that complies with it only from selfish views, is liable, in the changes of time, to forsake it: but the excellent nature of religion, as it is in itself, is invariable; it is always the same, at all times, and through all changes; it never alters in any respect.

The reason why gracious affections issue in holy practice, also further appears from the kind of excellency which is the foundation of all holy affections, *viz, their moral excellency or the beauty of their holiness.* No wonder that a love to holiness, for holiness' sake, inclines persons to practise holiness, and to practise every thing that is holy. Seeing holiness is the main thing that excites, draws, and governs all gracious affections, no wonder that all such affections tend to holiness. That which men love, they desire to have, to be united to, and possessed of. That beauty which men delight in, they desire to be adorned with. Those acts which men delight in, they necessarily incline to do.

And what has been observed of *divine teaching, and leading of the Spirit of God*, shews the reason of this tendency of gracious affections to an universally holy practice. For as has been observed, the Spirit of God in this his divine teaching and leading, gives the soul a natural relish of the sweetness of that which is holy, and of every thing that is holy, so far as comes in view, and excites a disrelish and disgust of every thing that is unholy.

The same also appears from what has been observed of the nature of that *spiritual knowledge*, which is the foundation of all holy affection, as consisting in *a sense and view of that excellency in divine things, which is supreme and transcendent.* For hereby

these things appear above all others, worthy to be chosen and adhered to. By the sight of the transcendent glory of Christ, true Christians see him worthy to be followed; and so are powerfully drawn after him; they see him worthy that they should forsake all for him. By the sight of that superlative amiableness, they are thoroughly disposed to be subject to him, and engaged to labour with earnestness and activity in his service, and made willing to go through all difficulties for his sake. And it is the discovery of this divine excellency of Christ, that makes them constant to him: for it makes so deep an impression upon their minds, that they cannot forget him; they will follow him whithersoever he goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavour to draw them away from him.

The reason of this practical tendency and issue of gracious affections, further appears, from what has been observed of such affections being *attended with a thorough conviction of the reality and certainty of divine things.* No wonder that they who were never thoroughly convinced that there is any reality in religion, will never be at the labour and trouble of such an earnest, universal and persevering practice of religion, through all difficulties, self-denials and sufferings, in a dependence on that, of which they are not convinced. But on the other hand, they who are thoroughly convinced of the certain truth of those things, must needs be governed by them in their practice; for the things revealed in the word of God are so great, and so infinitely more important than all others, that it is inconsistent with human nature, that a man should fully believe their truth, and not be influenced by them above all things in his practice.

Again, the reason of this expression and effect of holy affections in the practice, appears from what has been observed of *a change of nature, accompanying such affections.* Without a change of nature, men's practice will not be thoroughly changed. Until the tree be made good, the fruit will not be good. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. The swine may be washed, and appear clean for a little while, but yet, without a change of nature he will still wallow in the mire. Nature is a more powerful principle of action, than any thing that opposes it: though it may be violently restrained for a while, it will finally overcome that which restrains it. It is like the stream of a river, it may be stopped a while with a dam, but if nothing be done to dry the fountain, it will not be stopped always; it will have a course, either in its old channel, or a new one. Nature is a thing more constant and permanent, than any of those things that are the foundation of carnal men's reformation and righteousness. When a natural man denies his lusts, lives a strict religious life, and seems humble, painful and earnest in religion; it is not na-

tural, it is all force against nature; as when a stone is violently thrown upwards. But that force will be gradually spent; nature will remain in its full strength, and so prevails again, and the stone returns downwards. As long as corrupt nature is not mortified, but the principle left whole in a man, it is a vain thing to expect that it should not govern. But if the old nature be indeed mortified, and a new and heavenly nature infused; then may it well be expected, that men will walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of their days.

The reason of this practical exercise and effect of holy affections, may also be partly seen, from what has been said of that *spirit of humility, which attends them.* Humility is that wherein a spirit of obedience much consists. A proud spirit is rebellious, but a humble spirit is a submissive, obedient spirit. We see among men, that the servant who is of a haughty spirit, is not apt in every thing to be submissive and obediential to the will of his master; but it is otherwise with the servant who is of a lowly spirit.

That *lamb-like, dove-like spirit,* that has been spoken of, which accompanies all gracious affections, fulfils (as the apostle observes, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. and Gal. v. 14.) all the duties of the second table of the law; wherein Christian practice very much consists and the external practice of Christianity.

And the reason why gracious affections are attended with strict, universal, and constant obedience, further appears, from what has been observed of that *tenderness of spirit,* which accompanies the affections of true saints, causing in them so quick and lively a sense of pain, through the presence of sin, and such a dread of the appearance of evil.

One great reason why the Christian practice which flows from gracious affections, is universal, constant, and persevering, appears from what has been observed of those affections themselves from whence this practice flows, being universal and constant, in all kind of holy exercises, and towards all objects, in all circumstances, and at all seasons, *in a beautiful symmetry and proportion.*

And much of the reason why holy affections are expressed and manifested in such an earnestness, activity, engagedness, and perseverance in holy practice, appears from what has been observed of the spiritual appetite and longing after further attainments in religion, which evermore attends true affection, and does not decay, but increases as those affections increase. Thus we see how the tendency of holy affections to such a Christian practice as has been explained, appears from each of those characteristics of holy affection, before spoken of.

And this point may be further illustrated and confirmed, if it be considered, that the holy scriptures abundantly place sincerity

and soundness in religion, in making a full choice of God as our only Lord and portion, forsaking all for him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Christ, on counting the cost; in our hearts closing and complying with the religion of Jesus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments, and even our own lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves with all that we have, wholly and for ever unto Christ, without keeping back any thing, or making any reserve. In one word, sincerity consists in the great duty of *self-denial* for Christ; or in denying, i. e. as it were disowning and renouncing ourselves for him, making ourselves nothing that he may be all. See the texts to this purpose referred to in the margin*. Now surely having an heart to forsake all for Christ, tends to actually forsaking all for him, so far as there is occasion, and we have the trial. Having a heart to deny ourselves for Christ, tends to denying ourselves in deed, when Christ and self-interest stand in competition. A giving up of ourselves, with all that we have, in our hearts, without making any reserve there, tends to our behaving ourselves universally as his, as subject to his will, and devoted to his ends. Our hearts entirely closing with the religion of Jesus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its difficulties, upon a deliberate counting of the cost, tends to an universal closing with the same in act and deed, and actually going through all the difficulties we meet with in the way of religion, and so holding out with patience and perseverance.

The tendency of grace in the heart to holy practice, is very direct, and the connexion most natural, close, and necessary. True grace is not an inactive thing; there is nothing in heaven or earth of a more active nature: for it is life itself, the most active kind, even spiritual and divine life. It is no barren thing; there is nothing in the universe that in its nature has a greater tendency to fruit. Godliness in the heart has as direct a relation to practice, as a fountain has to a stream, or as the luminous nature of the sun has to beams sent forth, or as life has to breathing, or the beating of the pulse, or any other vital act; or as a habit or principle of action has to action: for it is the very nature and notion of grace, that it is a principle of holy action or practice. Regeneration, which is that work of God in

* Matth. v. 29, 30. Chap. vi. 24. Chap. viii. 19—22. Chap. iv. 18 to 22. Chap. x. 37, 38, 39. Chap. xvi. 24, 25, 26. Chap. xviii. 8, 9. Chap. xix. 21, 27, 28, 29. Luke v. 27, 28. Chap. x. 42. Chap. xii. 33, 34. Chap. xiv. 16—20. 25—33. Chap. xvi. 13. Acts iv. 34, 35. with Chap. v. 1—11. Rom. vi. 3—8. Gal. ii. 20. Chap. vi. 14. Philip. iii. 7—10. Jam. i. 8, 9, 10. Chap. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15. Rev. xiv. 4. Gen. xii. 1—4. with Heb. xi. 8, 9, 10. Gen. xxii. 12. and Heb. xi. 17. Chap. xi. 24—27. Deut. xiii. 6 and Chap. xxxiii. 9, Ruth. i. 6—16. with Psal. xlv. 10, 11. and 2 Sam. xv. 19—22. Psal. lxxxiii. 2, 5. Psal. xvi 5, 6. Lam. iii. 24. Jer. x. 19.

which grace is infused, has a direct relation to practice; for it is the very end of it, with a view to which the whole work is wrought. All is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold change wrought in the soul, so as directly to tend to this end; Eph. ii. 10. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Yea it is the very end of the redemption of Christ; Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* 2 Cor. v. 15. *He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.* Heb. ix. 14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* Col. i. 21, 22. *And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight.* 1 Pet. i. 18. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation.* Luke i. 74, 75. *That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.* God often speaks of holy practice, as the end of that great typical redemption, the redemption from Egyptian bondage; as Exod. iv. 23. *Let my son go, that he may serve me.* (So chap. iv. 23. and vii. 16. and viii. 1, 20. and ix. 1, 13. and x. 3.) And this is also declared to be the end of election; John xv. 16. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.* Eph. i. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.* Chap. ii. 10. *Created unto good works, which God hath fore-ordained that we should walk in them.* Holy practice is as much the end of all that God does about his saints, as fruit is the end of all the husbandman does about the growth of his field or vineyard: as the matter is often represented in scripture; (Matth. iii. 10. chap. xiii. 8. 23—30, 38. chap. xxi. 19, 33, 34. Luke xiii. 6. John xv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Heb. vi. 7, 8. Is. v. 1—8. Cant. viii. 11, 12. Is. xxvii. 2, 3.)* And therefore

* "To profess to know much is easy; but to bring your affections into subjection, to wrestle with lusts, to cross your wills and yourselves, upon every occasion, this is hard. The Lord looketh, that in our lives we should be serviceable to him, and useful to men. That which is within, the Lord and our brethren are never the better for it: but the outward obedience, flowing thence, glorifieth God, and does good to men. The Lord will have this done. What else is the end of our planting and watering, but that the trees may be filled with sap? And what is the

every thing in a true Christian is calculated to reach this end. This fruit of holy practice, is that to which every grace, every discovery, and every individual thing which belongs to Christian experience has a direct tendency*.

The constant and indissoluble connexion there is between a Christian principle and profession in the true saints, and the fruit of holy practice in their lives, was typified of old in the frame of the golden candlestick in the temple. It is beyond doubt that the golden candlestick, with its seven branches and seven lamps, was a type of the church of Christ. The Holy Ghost himself has been pleased to put that matter out of doubt, by representing his church by such a golden candlestick with seven lamps, in the fourth chapter of Zechariah, and representing the seven churches of Asia by seven golden candlesticks, in the first chapter of the Revelation. That golden candlestick in the temple was every where, throughout its whole frame, made with *knops and flowers*, Exod. xxv. 31. to the end, and chap. xxxvii. 17—24. The word translated *knop*, in the original signifies apple or pomegranate. There was a *knop and a flower, a knop and a flower:* wherever there was a flower, there was an apple or pomegranate with it: the flower and the fruit were constantly connected, without fail. The flower contained the principles of the fruit, and a beautiful promising appearance of it; and it never was a deceitful appearance; the principle or shew of fruit, had evermore real fruit attending it, or succeeding it. So it is in the church of Christ: there is the gracious principle of fruit in the heart; and there is an amiable profession, signified by the open flowers of the candlestick; and there is answerable fruit, in holy practice,

end of that sap, but that the trees may bring forth fruit? What careth the husbandman for leaves and barren trees?"—(Dr. Preston of the Church's Carriage.)

* "What is the end of every grace, but to mollify the heart, and make it pliable to some command or other? Look, how many commandments, so many graces there are in virtue and efficacy, although not so many several names are given them. The end of every such grace is to make us obedient: as the end of temperance is chastity, to bow the heart to these commands, "Be ye sober, &c. not in chambering and wantonness, &c." When the Lord commandeth us not to be angry with our brother, the end of meekness, and why the Lord infuseth it, is to keep us from unadvised rash anger. So faith, the end of it is to take Jesus Christ, to make us obedient to the command of the gospel, which commands us to believe in him. So as all graces do join together, but to frame and fashion the soul to obedience, then so much obedience as is in your lives, so much grace in your hearts, and no more. Therefore ask your hearts, how subject you are to the Lord in your lives? It was the counsel that Francis Spira gave to them about him, saith he, Learn all of me to take heed of severing faith and obedience: I taught justification by faith, but neglected obedience; and therefore is this befallen me. I have known some godly men, whose comfort on their death-beds hath been not from the inward acts of their minds, which apart considered, might be subject to misapprehensions, but from the course of obedience in their lives, issuing thence. Let Christians look to it, that in all their conversation, as they stand in every relation, as scholars, tradesmen, husbands, wives, look to this, that when they come to die, they have been subject in all things. This will yield comfort." (Dr. Preston's Church Carriage.)

constantly attending this principle and profession. Every branch of the golden candlestick, thus composed of golden apples and flowers, was crowned with a burning, shining lamp on the top of it. For it is by this means that the saints shine as lights in the world, by making a fair and good profession of religion, and having their profession evermore joined with answerable fruit in practice: agreeable to that of our Saviour, Matth. v. 15, 16. *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may* SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, *and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* A fair and beautiful profession, and golden fruits accompanying one another, are the amiable ornaments of the true church of Christ. Therefore we find that apples and flowers were not only the ornaments of the candlestick in the temple, but of the temple itself, which is a type of the church; which the apostle tells us, *is the temple of the living God.* See 1 Kings vi. 18. *And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops, and open flowers.* The ornaments and crown of the pillars, at the entrance of the temple, were of the same sort: they were lilies and pomegranates, or flowers and fruits mixed together, 1 Kings vii. 18, 19. So it is with all those that are *as pillars in the temple of God, who shall go no more out,* or never be ejected as intruders; as it is with all true saints; Rev. iii. 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.*

Much the same thing seems to be signified by the ornaments on the skirt of the ephod, the garment of Aaron the high priest; which were golden bells and pomegranates. That these skirts of Aaron's garment represent the church, or the saints, (that are as it were the garment of Christ) is manifest; for they are evidently so spoken of, Psal. cxxxiii. 1, 2. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.* That ephod of Aaron signified the same with the seamless coat of Christ our great High Priest. As Christ's coat had no seam, but was woven from the top throughout, so was the ephod, Exod. xxxix. 22. As God took care in his providence, that Christ's coat should not be rent; so God took special care that the ephod should not be rent; (Exod. xxviii. 32. and chap. xxxix. 23.) The golden bells on this ephod, by their precious matter and pleasant sound, well represent the good profession that the saints make; and the pomegranates, the fruit they bring forth. And as in the hem of the ephod, bells and pomegranates were constantly connected, as is once and again observed, there was *a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pome-*

granate, (Exod. xxviii. 34. and chap. xxxix. 26.) so it is in the true saints; their good profession and their good fruit, constantly accompany one another: the fruit they bring forth in life, evermore answers the pleasant sound of their profession.

Again, the very same thing is represented by Christ, in his description of his spouse, Cant. vii. 2. *Thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.* Here again are beautiful flowers, and good fruit, accompanying one another. The lilies were fair and beautiful flowers, and the wheat was good fruit.

As this fruit of Christian practice is evermore found in true saints, according as they have opportunity and trial, so it is found in them only; none but true Christians do live such an obedient life, so universally devoted to their duty, and given up to the business of a Christian, as has been explained. All unsanctified men are *workers of iniquity:* they are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do.—There is no hypocrite that will go through with the business of religion, will both begin and finish the tour. They will not endure the trials God is wont to bring on the professors of religion, but will turn aside to their crooked ways; they will not be thoroughly faithful to Christ in their practice, and follow him withersoever he goes. Whatever lengths they may go in religion in some instances, though they may appear exceeding strict, and mightily engaged in the service of God for a season; yet they are servants to sin; the chains of their old task-masters are not broken. Their lusts yet have a reigning power in their hearts; and therefore to these masters they will bow down again*. Dan. xii. 10. *Many shall be purified,*

* "No unregenerate man, though he go never so far, let him do never so much, but he lives in some one sin or other, secret or open, little or great. Judas went far, but he was covetous; Herod went far, but he loved his Herodias. Every dog hath his kennel; every swine hath his swill; and every wicked man his lust."—Shepard's *Sincere Convert*, 1st edition, p. 96.

"There is never an unsound heart in the world, but as they say of witches, they have some familiar that sucks them, so they have some lust that is beloved of them, some beloved there is they have given a promise to never to forsake."—Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 15.

"No man that is married to the law, but his fig-leaves cover some nakedness. All his duties ever brood some lust. There is some one sin or other the man lives in; which either the Lord discovers, and he will not part with, as the young man; or else is so spiritual, he cannot see all his life-time. Read through the strictest of all, and see this, Matth. xxiii. *Painted sepulchres.* Paul that was blameless, yet (Eph. ii. 3. Tit. iii. 3.) *served divers lusts and pleasures.* And the reason is, the law is not the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9. which breaks off from every sin. There is no law that can give life, Gal. iii. 21. and hence many men have strong resolutions, and break all again. Hence men sin and sorrow, and pray again, and then go with more ease in their sin. Examine thyself; is there any living lust with thy righteousness? It is sure, it is a righteousness thou art married to, and never wert yet matched to Christ."—Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 19, 20.

"No hypocrite, though he closeth with Christ, and for a time grow up in knowledge of, and communion with Christ, but he hath at that time hidden lusts

and made white, and tried: but the wicked will do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand. Is. xxvi. 10. *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly.* Is. xxxvi. 8. *And an high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it.* Hos. xiv. 9. *The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.* Job xxvii. 8, 9, 10. *What is the hope of the hypocrite?—Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* An unsanctified man may hide his sin, and may in many things and for a season refrain from sin; but he will not be brought finally to renounce,

and thorns that overgrow his growings, and choke all at last, and in conclusion meditates a league between Christ and his lusts, and seeks to reconcile them together."—Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 109.

"——Their faith is in such a party, as never was yet thoroughly rent from sin. And here is the great wound of the most cunning hypocrites living.—Let a man be cast down as low as hell with sorrow, and lie under chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come; let a man then be raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; let a man reform and shine like an earthly angel; yet if not rent from lust, that either you did never see it, or if so, you have not followed the Lord to remove it, but proud, dogged, worldly, sluggish still, false in your dealings, cunning in your tradings, devils in your families, images in your churches; you are objects of pity now, and shall be of terror at the great day. For where sin remains in power, it will bring faith, and Christ, and joy into bondage and service of itself." Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 125.

"Methinks it is with the best hypocrites, as it is with divers old merchants: they prize and desire the gain of merchandise; but to be at the trouble to prepare the ship, to put themselves upon the hazard and dangers of the ship, to go and fetch the treasure that they prize, this they will never do. So many prize and desire earnestly the treasures of heaven; but to be at the trouble of a heaven-voyage to fetch this treasure, to pass through the valley of Baca, tears, temptations, the powers of darkness, the breaches, opposition, and contradictions of a sinful unbelieving heart, good and evil report, to pass from one depth and wave to another, this the best hypocrite fails in; and hence loses all at last. And this I conceive to be one of the great differences between the strong desires and esteems of hypocrites and saints.—Look, as it is with men that have two trades, or two shops; one is as much as ever they can follow or tend: they are forced at last to put off one, and they must neglect one; so here—That spirit of sloth and slumber, which the Lord ever leaves the best hypocrite to, so mightily oppresseth all their senses, that they cannot use effectually all means to accomplish their ends. And hence a man desires the end, but has it not; Prov. xiii. 4."—Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 150, 151.

"Read through all the scripture; constantly, never any hypocrites but they had this brand, Matth. vii. 23. *You workers of iniquity.*"—Ibid. Part I. p. 195.

"A carnal man may hit upon some good duty that God commands, and refrain from some sin that God forbids; but to go through, he cannot: to take up reproach and disgrace, to lose his credit, to forsake his friends, to lose honour, and riches, and pleasures; this he will not do, until he be humbled."—Dr. Preston *on Paul's conversion.*

"So it is with men, because they want humiliation. Therefore their *profession* and *they* do not continue, but part willingly one from another. They will do some things, but not all things: and they will forego some things, but not all things. And therefore our Saviour saith, Luke xiv. *He that will not forsake all for my sake, is not worthy of me.* He is not worth the saving, that prizes not me above all things whatsoever. And a man will not prize Christ, nor forsake all things for Christ, until he be humbled."—*Ibid.*

and give it a bill of divorce; sin is too dear to him, for him to be willing for that: *Wickedness is sweet in his mouth:* and therefore *he hides it under his tongue; he spares it, and forsakes it not; but keeps it still within his mouth*, Job xx. 12, 13. Herein chiefly consists she straitness of the gate, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life; on account of which, carnal men will not go in thereat, viz. that it is a way of utterly denying and finally renouncing all ungodliness, and so a way of *self-denial* or *self-renunciation.*

Many natural men, under the means used, and God's strivings with them, do by their sins as Pharaoh did by his pride and covetousness; these he gratified by keeping the children of Isreal in bondage, when God strove with him to let the people go. When God's hand pressed Pharaoh sore, and he was exercised with fears of God's future wrath, he entertained some thoughts of letting the people go, and promised he would do it; but from time to time he broke his promises, when he saw there was respite. When God filled Egypt with thunder and lightning, and the fire ran along the ground, then Pharaoh is brought to confess his sin with seeming humility, and to have a great resolution to let the people go, Exod. ix. 27, 28. *And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked: entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.* So sinners are sometimes by thunders and lightnings, and great terrors of the law, brought to a seeming work of humiliation, and to an appearance of parting with their sins; but are no more thoroughly brought to a disposition to dismiss them, than Pharaoh was to let the people go. Pharaoh in the struggle between his conscience and his lusts, was for contriving that God might be served, and he too enjoy his lusts, that were gratified by the slavery of the people. Moses insisted that Israel's God should be served: Pharaoh was willing to consent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the people: *Go sacrifice to your God in the land*, says he, Exod. viii. 25. So, many sinners are for contriving to serve God, and enjoy their lusts too. Moses objected against complying with Pharaoh's proposal, because serving God, and yet continuing in Egypt under their task-masters, did not agree together, and were inconsistent. After this Pharaoh consented to let the people go, provided they would not go *far* away: he was not willing to part with them finally, and therefore would have them within reach. So do many hypocrites with respect to their sins. Afterwards Pharaoh consented to let the *men* go, if they would leave the *women* and *children*, Exod. x. 8—10. And then after that, when God's hand was yet harder

upon him, he consented that they should go, even *women* and *children*, as well as *men*, provided they would leave their *cattle* behind: but he was not willing to let them go, and all that they had, Exod. x. 24. So it oftentimes is with sinners; they are willing to part with some of their sins, but not all; they are brought to part with the more gross acts of sin, but not to part with their lusts, in lesser indulgencies of them. Whereas we must part with all our sins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, *men*, *women*, *children*, and *cattle*: they must all be let go, with *their young, and with their old, with their sons, and with their daughters, with their flocks, and with their herds, there must not be an hoof left behind*: as Moses told Pharaoh, with respect to the children of Israel. At last, when it came to extremity, Pharaoh consented to let the people all go, and all that they had; but he was not stedfastly of that mind; he soon repented, and pursued after them again. The reason was, that those lusts of pride and covetousness, which were gratified by Pharaoh's dominion over the people, and the gains of their service, were never really mortified in him, but only violently restrained. And thus, he being guilty of backsliding, after his seeming compliance with God's commands, was destroyed without remedy. Thus there may be a forced parting with ways of disobedience to the commands of God, that may seem to be universal, as to what appears for a little season: but because it is a mere force, without the mortification of the inward principle of sin, they will not persevere in it; but will return as the dog to his vomit; and so bring on themselves dreadful and remediless destruction. There were many false disciples in Christ's time, that followed him for a while; but none of them followed him to the end; some on one occasion, and some on another, went back and walked no more with him*.

* "The counterfeit and common grace of foolish virgins, after some time of glorious profession, will certainly go out and be quite spent. It consumes in the using, and shining, and burning.—Men that have been most forward, decay; their gifts decay, life decays.—It is so, after some time of profession: for at first, it rather grows than decays and withers; but afterward they have enough of it, it withers and dies.—The Spirit of God comes upon many hypocrites, in abundant and plentiful measure of awakening grace; it comes upon them, as it did upon Balaam, and as it is in overflowing waters, which spread far, and grow very deep, and fill many empty places.—Though it doth come upon them so, yet it doth never rest within, so as to dwell there, to take up an eternal mansion for himself.—Hence it doth decay by little and little; until at last it is quite gone. As ponds filled with rain-water, which comes upon them; not spring water, that riseth up within them: it dries up by little and little, until quite dry."—Shepherd's *Parable*, Part II. p. 58, 59.

"Some men may apprehend Christ, neither out of fear of misery, nor only to preserve some sin; but God lets in light and heat of the blessed beams of the glorious gospel of the Son of God: and therefore there is mercy, rich, free, sweet, for damned, great, vile sinners: Good Lord, saith the soul, what a sweet ministry, word, God, and gospel is this! and there rests. This was the frame of the stony-ground; which heard the word, and received it with joy, and for a time believed. And this is the case of thousands, that are much affected with the promise and

From what has been said, it is manifest, that Christian practice, or a holy life, is *a great and distinguishing sign* of true and saving grace. But I may go further, and assert, that it is *the chief* of all the signs of grace, both as an evidence of the sincerity of professors UNTO OTHERS, and also to their OWN CONSCIENCE.

But then it is necessary that this be rightly taken, and that it be well understood and observed, in what sense and manner Christian practice is the *greatest sign* of grace. Therefore, to set this matter in a clear light, I will endeavour particularly and distinctly to prove, that Christian practice is the *principal sign* by which Christians are to judge, both of their own and others' sincerity of godliness; withal observing some things that are needful to be particutarly noted, in order to a right understanding of this matter.

SECT. XIII.

Christian practice or holy life, is a manifestation and sign of the sincerity of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbours and brethren.

And that this is the *chief sign* of grace in this respect, is very evident from the word of God. Christ, who knew best how to give us rules to judge of others, has repeated, and inculcated the rule, that we should know them by their fruits; Matth. vii. 16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* And then, after arguing the point, and giving clear reasons why men's fruits must be the chief evidence of what sort they are, in the following verses, he closes by repeating the assertion; ver. 20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* Again chap. xii. 33. *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt.*—As much as to say, it is a very absurd thing, for any to suppose that the tree is good, and yet the fruit bad; that the tree is of one sort, and the fruit of another; for the proper evidence of the nature of the tree is its fruit. Nothing else can be intended by that last clause in the verse, *For the tree is known by its fruit*, than that the tree is chiefly known by its fruit, that this is

mercy of Christ, and hang upon free grace for a time: but as it is with sweet smells in a room, they continue not long; or as flowers, they grow old and withered, and then fall. In time of temptation, lust, and world, and sloth, is more sweet than Christ, and all his gospel is."—Shepherd's *Parable*, Part II. p. 168.

"Never any carnal heart, but some root of bitterness did grow up at last in this soil."—Shepherd's *Parable*, Part II. p. 195.

"We shall see in experience: take the best professors living; though they may come, as they and others judged, to the Lord, and follow the Lord; yet they will in time depart. The Spirit never was given effectually to draw them; nor yet to keep them."—Shepherd's *Parable*, Part I. p. 205.

the main and most proper diagnostic by which one tree is distinguished from another. So Luke vi. 44. *Every tree is known by his own fruit.* Christ no where says, Ye shall know the tree by its leaves or flowers; or ye shall know men by their talk, by the good story they tell of their experiences, by the manner and air of their speaking, or emphasis and pathos of expression; or ye shall know them by their speaking feelingly, or by abundance of talk, or by many tears and affectionate expressions, or by the affections ye feel in your hearts towards them: but by *their fruits shall ye know them; the tree is known by its fruit; every tree is known by its own fruit.* And as this is the evidence that Christ has directed us mainly to look at in others, in judging of them, so it is the evidence that Christ has mainly directed us to give to others, whereby they may judge of us; Matth. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Here Christ directs us to manifest our godliness to others. Godliness is as it were a light that shines in the soul: Christ directs that this light should not only shine within, but that it should *shine* out *before men,* that they may see it. But which way shall this be? It is by our good works. Christ doth not say, that others hearing your good words, your good story, or your pathetical expressions; but *that others seeing your good* WORKS, *may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Doubtless when Christ gives us a rule how to make our light shine, that others may have evidence of it, his rule is the best. And the apostles mention a Christian practice, as the principal ground of their esteem of persons as true Christians. As the apostle Paul, in the 6th chapter of Hebrews. There the apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, speaks of persons who have great common illuminations, who have *been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, who afterwards fall away,* and are like barren ground, *that is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned:* and then he immediately adds in the 9th verse, (expressing his charity for the Christian Hebrews, as having that saving grace, which is better than all these common illuminations) *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation: though we thus speak.* And then in the next verse, he tells them what was the reason he had such good thoughts of them; he does not say, that it was because they had given him a good account of a work of God upon their souls, and talked very experimentally; but it was their work, and labour of love; *for God is not unrighteous, to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.* And the same apostle speaks of

faithfully serving God in practice, as the proper proof to others of men's loving Christ above all, and preferring his honour to their private interest, Phil. ii. 21, 22. *For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's: but ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served me in the gospel.* So the apostle John expresses the same, as the ground of his good opinion of Gaius, 3 John 3—6. *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee.* But how did the brethren testify of the truth that was in Gaius? and how did the apostle judge of the truth that was in him? it was not because they testified that he had given them a good account of the steps of his experiences, and talked like one that felt what he said, and had the very language of a Christian: but they testified, *that he walked in the truth:* as it follows, *even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth. Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren and to strangers: which have borne witness of thy charity before the church.* Thus the apostle explains what the brethren had borne witness of, when they *came and testified of his walking in the truth.* And the apostle seems in this same place, to give it as a rule to Gaius how he should judge of others. In verse 10, he mentions one Diotrephes, that did not conduct himself well, and led away others after him; and then in the 11th verse, he directs Gaius to beware of such, and not to follow them: and gives him a rule whereby he may know them, exactly agreeable to that rule Christ had given before, *by their fruits ye shall know them,* says the apostle, *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil, hath not seen God.* And I would further observe, that the apostle James, expressly comparing that way of shewing others our faith and Christianity by our practice or works, with other ways of shewing our faith without works, or not by works, does plainly and abundantly prefer the former; Jam. ii. 18. *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.* A manifestation of our faith *without works,* or in a way diverse from works, is a manifestation of it in *words,* whereby a man professes faith. As the apostle says, ver. 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man* SAY *he hath faith?*—Therefore here are two ways of manifesting to our neighbour what is in our hearts; one by what we *say,* and the other by what we *do.* But the apostle abundantly prefers the latter as best evidence. Now certainly all accounts we give of ourselves in words, our saying that we have faith, and that we are converted; telling the manner how we came to have faith, the steps by which it was wrought, and the discoveries and experiences that accompanied

it, are still but manifesting our faith by what we *say*; it is but shewing our faith by our *words*; which the apostle speaks of as falling vastly short of manifesting of it by what we do, and shewing our faith by our *works*.

And as the scripture plainly teaches, that practice is the best evidence of the sincerity of professing Christians; so reason teaches the same thing. Reason shows, that men's deeds are better and more faithful interpreters of their minds, than their words. The common sense of all mankind, through all ages and nations, teaches them to judge of men's hearts chiefly by their practice, in other matters: as, whether a man be a loyal subject, a true lover, a dutiful child, or a faithful servant. If a man professes a great deal of love and friendship to another, reason teaches all men, that such a profession is not so great an evidence of his being a real and hearty friend, as his appearing a friend in deeds; being faithful and constant to his friend, in prosperity and adversity, ready to lay out himself, and deny himself, and suffer in his personal interest, to do him a kindness. A wise man will trust to such evidences of the sincerity of friendship, further than a thousand earnest professions and solemn declarations, and most affectionate expressions of friendship in words. And there is equal reason, why practice should also be looked upon as the best evidence of friendship towards Christ. Reason says the same that Christ said, in John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* Thus if we see a man, who in the course of his life seems to follow and imitate Christ, and greatly to exert and deny himself for his honour, and to promote his kingdom and interest in the world; reason teaches, that this is an evidence of love to Christ, more to be depended on, than if a man only *says* he has love to him, and tells of his inward experiences, what strong love he felt, and how his heart was drawn out in love at such a time; when it may be there appears but little imitation of Christ in his behaviour. He seems backward to do any great matter for him, or to put himself out of his way for the promoting of his kingdom, but seems to be apt to excuse himself whenever he is called to deny himself for Christ. So if a man, in declaring his experiences, tells how he found his heart weaned from the world, and saw the vanity of it, so that all looked as nothing to him at such and such times, and professes that he gives up all to God, and calls heaven and earth to witness to it: but yet in his practice is violent in pursuing the world, what he gets he keeps close, is exceeding loth to part with much of it to charitable and pious uses, it comes from him almost like his heart's blood. But there is another professing Christian, that says not a great deal, yet in his behaviour appears ready at all times to forsake the world, whenever it stands

in the way of his duty, and is free to part with it at any time, to promote religion and the good of his fellow-creatures. Reason teaches, that the latter gives far the most credible manifestation of an heart weaned from the world. And if a man appears to walk humbly before God and men, and to be of a conversation that savours of a broken heart, appearing patient and resigned to God under affliction, and meek in his behaviour amongst men; this is a better evidence of humiliation, than if a person only *tells* how great a sense he had of his own unworthiness—how he was brought to lie in the dust, quite emptied of himself, and to see himself all over filthy and abominable, &c. &c.—but yet acts as if he looked upon himself one of the first and best of saints, and by just right the head of all the Christians in the town. He is assuming, self-willed, and impatient of the least contradiction or opposition; we may be assured in such a case, that a man's practice comes from a lower place in his heart, than his profession. So (to mention no more instances) if a professor of Christianity manifest in his behaviour a tender spirit towards others in calamity, ready to bear their burdens with them, willing to spend his substance for them, and to suffer many inconveniences in his worldly interest to promote the good of others' souls and bodies; is not this a more credible manifestation of a spirit of love to men, than only a man's *telling* what love he felt to others at certain times—how he pitied their souls, how his soul was in travail for them, and how he felt a hearty love and pity to his enemies—when in his behaviour he seems to be of a very selfish spirit, close and niggardly, all for himself, and none for his neighbours, and perhaps envious and contentious? Persons in a pang of affection may think they have a willingness of heart for great things, to do much and to suffer much, and so may profess it very earnestly and confidently, when really their hearts are far from it. Thus many in their affectionate pangs have thought themselves willing to be damned eternally for the glory of God. Passing affections easily produce words; and words are cheap; and godliness is more easily feigned in words than in actions. Christian practice is a costly laborious thing. The self-denial that is required of Christians, the narrowness of the way that leads to life, does not consist in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to *talk* like saints, than to *act* like saints.

Thus it is plain, that Christian practice is the best sign or manifestation of the true godliness of a professing Christian, to the eye of his *neighbours*. But then, the following things should be well observed, that this matter may be righly understood:

First, It must be observed, that when the scripture speaks of Christian practice, as the best evidence to others of sincerity and

truth of grace, *a profession of Christianity* is not excluded, but supposed. The rules mentioned, were rules given to the followers of Christ, to guide them in their thoughts of *professing Christians*, and those that offered themselves as some of their society, whereby they might judge of the truth of their *pretences*, and the sincerity of the *profession* they made; and not for the trial of Heathens, or those who made no pretence to Christianity, and with whom Christians had nothing to do. This is as plain as possible in that great rule which Christ gives in the 7th of Matthew, *By their fruits ye shall know them.* He there gives a rule how to judge of professed Christians, yea those who made a very high profession, *false prophets, who come in sheeps' clothing*, as ver. 15. So that passage of the apostle James, chap. ii. 18. *Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.* It is evident, that both these sorts of persons, offering to give these diverse evidences of their faith, are *professors* of faith; this is implied in each offering to give evidences of the faith professed. And it is evident by the preceding verses, that the apostle is speaking of professors of faith in Jesus Christ. So it is very plain, that the apostle John, in those passages observed in his third epistle, is speaking of *professing* Christians. Though in these rules, the Christian *practice* of professors be spoken of as the greatest and most distinguishing sign of their sincerity, much more evidential than their profession itself; yet a profession of Christianity is plainly pre-supposed. It is not the main thing in the evidence, nor any thing distinguishing; yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in it. As having an animal body, is not any thing distinguishing of a man, from other creatures, and is not the main thing in the evidence of human nature; yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in the evidence. So that if any man should say plainly that he was not a Christian, and did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or a person sent of God; these rules of Christ and his apostles do not at all oblige us to look upon him as a sincere Christian, let his visible practice and virtues be what they will. And not only do these rules take no place with respect to a man that explicitly denies Christianity, and is a professed Deist, Jew, Heathen, or open infidel; but also with respect to a man that only forbears to make a profession of Christianity: because these rules were given us only to judge of professing Christians; fruits must be joined with open flowers; bells and pomegranates go together.

But here will naturally arise this inquiry, viz. When a man may be said to profess Christianity? or, what profession may properly be called a profession of Christianity? I answer in two things:

1. In order to a man's being properly said to make a profession of *Christianity*, there must undoubtedly be a *profession* of all that is necessary to his being a Christian, or of so much as belongs to the *essence* of Christianity. Whatsoever is essential in Christianity itself, the profession of that is essential in the profession of Christianity. The profession must be of the thing professed. For a man to *profess* Christianity, is for him to declare that he *has* it. And therefore so much as belongs to the true denomination of a thing; so much is essential to a true declaration of *that* thing. If we *take* only a part of Christianity, and leave out a part which is essential to it, what we take is not Christianity; because something of the essence of it is wanting. So if we *profess* only a part, and leave out a part that is essential, that which we profess is not Christianity. Thus in order to a profession of Christianity, we must profess that we believe that Jesus is the Messiah; for this reason, because such a belief is essential to Christianity. And so we must profess, either expressly or implicitly, that Jesus satisfied for our sins, and other essential doctrines of the gospel, because a belief of these things also are essential to Christianity. But there are other things as essential to religion, as an orthodox belief; which it is therefore as necessary that we should profess, in order to our being truly said to profess Christianity. Thus it is essential to Christianity that we repent of our sins, that we be convinced of our own sinfulness, that we are sensible we have justly exposed ourselves to God's wrath; that our hearts renounce all sin, that we do with our whole hearts embrace Christ as our only Saviour, that we love him above all, are willing for his sake to forsake all, and that we give up ourselves to be entirely and for ever his, &c. Such things as these as much belong to the *essence* of Christianity, as the belief of any of the doctrines of the gospel: and therefore the *profession* of them as much belongs to a Christian profession. Not that in order to persons' being professing Christians, it is necessary that there should be an explicit profession of every individual thing that belongs to Christian grace or virtue; but certainly, there must be a profession, either express or implicit, of what is of the essence of religion. And as to those things that Christians should *express* in their profession, we ought to be guided by the precepts of God's word, or by scripture-examples of public professions of religion, which God's people have made from time to time.

Thus they ought to profess their repentance of sin: as of old, when persons were initiated as professors, they came confessing their sins, manifesting their humiliation for sin, Matth. iii. 6. And the baptism they were baptized with, was called *the baptism of repentance*, Mark i. 3. And John, when he had baptized them,

exhorted them to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, Matth. iii. 8. i. e. agreeable to that repentance which they had professed; encouraging them, that if they did so, they should escape the wrath to come, and be gathered as wheat into God's garner, Matth. iii. 7, 8—10, 12. So the apostle Peter says to the Jews, Acts ii. 38. *Repent, and be baptized:* which shews, that repentance is a qualification that must be *visible*, in order to baptism; and therefore ought to be publicly *professed*. So when the Jews that returned from captivity, entered publicly into covenant, it was with confession, or public profession of repentance of their sins, Neh. ix. 2. This profession of repentance should include or imply a profession of conviction, that God would be just in our damnation: (see Neh. ix. 33—35. and chap. x.) They should profess their faith in Jesus Christ, that they embrace Christ, rely upon him as their Saviour with their whole hearts, and joyfully entertain his gospel. Thus Philip, in order to his baptizing the eunuch, required him to profess, that he *believed with all his heart*. They who were received as visible Christians, at that great out-pouring of the Spirit, which began at the day of Pentecost, appeared *gladly to receive the gospel:* Acts ii. 41. *Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.* They should profess that they rely on Christ's righteousness and strength, that they are devoted to him as their only Lord and Saviour, and that they rejoice in him as their only righteousness and portion. It is foretold, that all nations should be brought publicly to make this profession, Is. xlv. 22, &c. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even unto him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* They should profess to give up themselves entirely to Christ, and to God through him; as the children of Israel, when they publicly recognized their covenant with God; Deut. xxvi. 17. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.* They ought to profess a willingness of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties, and to walk in a way of obedience to God universally and perseveringly; (Exod. xix. 8. and xxiv. 3, 7. Deut. xxvi. 16—18. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. Neh. x. 28, 29. Psal. cxix. 57, 106.) They ought to profess, that all their hearts and souls are in these engagements to be the Lord's, and for ever to serve him, 2 Chron.

xv. 12—14. God's people swearing *by* his name, or *to* his name, as it might be rendered, (by which seems to be signified their solemnly giving up themselves to him in covenant, and vowing to receive him as their God, and to be entirely his, to obey and serve him), is spoken of as a duty to be performed by all God's visible Israel; (Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20. Psal. lxiii. 11. Is. xix. 18. chap. xlv. 23, 24. compared with Rom. xiv. 11. and Phil. ii. 10, 11. Is. xlviii. 1, 2, and lxv. 15, 16. Jer. iv. 2. and v. 7. and xii. 16. Hos. iv. 15. and x. 4.) Therefore, in order to persons' being entitled to full esteem and charity, with their neighbours, as being sincere professors of Christianity; by those fore-mentioned rules of Christ and his apostles, there must be a visibly holy life, with a profession, either expressing, or plainly implying such things as those which have been now mentioned. We are to *know them by their fruits:* that is, we are by their fruits to know whether they be what they profess to be; not that we are to know by their fruits, that they have something in them, to which they do not so much as pretend. Moreover,

2. That profession of these things, which is properly called a Christian profession, and which must be joined with Christian practice, in order to persons' being entitled to the benefit of those rules, must be made (as to what appears) *understandingly:* that is, they must be persons that appear to have been so far instructed in the principles of religion, as to be in an ordinary capacity to *understand* the proper import of what is expressed in their profession. For sounds are no signification or declarations of any thing, any further than men understand the meaning of their own sounds.

But in order to persons' making a proper profession of Christianity, such as the scripture directs, and such as the followers of Christ should require, in order to the acceptance of professors, with full charity, as of their society; it is not necessary they should give an account of the *particular steps* and method, by which the Holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought those great essentials of Christianity in their hearts. There is no footstep in the scripture of any such way of the apostles, or primitive ministers and Christians, requiring any such relation, in order to their receiving and treating others as their Christian brethren: or of their first examining them concerning the particular method and order of their experiences. They required of them a profession of the things wrought; but no account of the *manner* of working was required of them. Nor is there the least shadow in the scripture of any such custom in the church of God, from Adam to the death of the apostle John.

I am far from saying, that it is not requisite that persons should give any sort of account of their experiences to their

brethren. For persons to profess those things wherein the essence of Christianity lies, is the same thing as to profess that they *experience* those things. Thus for persons solemnly to *profess*, that, in a sense and full conviction of their own utter sinfulness, misery, and impotence, and totally undone state as in themselves—their just desert of God's utter rejection and eternal wrath, without mercy, and the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, or any thing in them, to satisfy divine justice, or recommend them to God's favour—they do only and entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness; it is the same thing as to profess, that they *experience* those particulars. When any *profess*, that they do with all their hearts believe the truth of the gospel of Christ; and that, in a full conviction and sense of his sufficiency and perfect excellency as a Saviour, as exhibited in the gospel, they do with their whole souls cleave to him, and acquiesce in him, as the refuge and rest of their souls, and the fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their sins, and utterly renounce all sin, and give up themselves wholly to Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to him as their King; that they give him their hearts and their whole man; and are willing and resolved to have God for their whole and everlasting portion; what is it but saying, that they *experience* those things? Again, if any *profess*, in a dependence on God's promises of a future eternal enjoyment of him in heaven, to renounce all the enjoyments of this vain world, selling all for this great treasure and future inheritance, and to comply with every command of God, even the most difficult and self-denying, and devote their whole lives to God's service; what is it but a declaration of so much *experience*? Once more, when any profess, that, in the forgiveness of those who have injured them, and a general benevolence to mankind, their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, cleave to them and love them as their brethren, and worship and serve God, and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all incumbent duties, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ; I say, for persons solemnly to profess such things as these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing, as to profess that they are conscious to, or do *experience* such things in their hearts.

Nor do I suppose, that persons giving an account of their experience of particular exercises of grace, with the times and circumstances, gives no advantage to others in forming a judgment of their state; or that persons may not fitly be inquired of concerning these, especially in cases of great importance, where all possible satisfaction is to be desired and sought after, as in the case of ordination or approbation of a minister. It may give

advantage in forming a judgment, in several respects; and among others in this, that hereby we may be better satisfied, that the professor speaks honestly and understandingly, in what he professes; and that he does not make the profession in mere formality. In order to a profession of Christianity being accepted to any purpose, there ought to be good reason, from the circumstances of the profession, to think, that the professor does not make such a profession out of a mere customary compliance with a prescribed form, using words without any distinct meaning, or in a very lax and ambiguous manner, as confessions of faith, are often subscribed; but that the professor understandingly and honestly signifies what he is conscious of in his own heart; otherwise his profession can be of no significance, and no more to be regarded than the sound of things without life. But indeed (whatever advantage an account of particular exercises may give in judging of this) it must be owned, that the professor having been previously thoroughly instructed by his teachers, and giving good proof of his sufficient knowledge, together with a practice agreeable to his profession, is the best evidence of this.

Nor do I suppose, but that if a person—who is inquired of about particular passages, times and circumstances of his Christain experience—seems to be able to give a distinct account of the manner of his first conversion, in such a method as has been frequently observable in true conversion, so that things seem sensibly and distinctly to follow one another in the order of time, according to the order of nature; it is an illustrating circumstance which among other things, adds lustre to the evidence he gives his brethren of the truth of his experiences.

But what I speak of as unscriptural, is insisting on a particular account of the *distinct method* and steps, wherein the Spirit of God did sensibly proceed, in first bringing the soul into a state of salvation, as a thing *requisite* in order to receiving a professor into full charity as a real Christian; so as, for the want of such relation to disregard other things, in the evidence which persons give to their neighbours of their Christianity, that are vastly more important and essential.

Secondly, That we may rightly understand how Christian practice is the *greatest* evidence that *others* can have of the sincerity of a professing Christian, it is needful that what was said before, shewing what Christian practice is, should be borne in mind; and that it should be considered how far this may be visible to others. Merely that a professor of Christianity is, what is commonly called, an honest, moral man, (i. e. having no special transgression or iniquity that might bring a blot on his character,) is no great evidence of the sincerity of his profession. This is not *making his light shine before men.* This is not that *work and la-*

bour of love shewed towards Christ's name, which gave the apostle such persuasion of the sincerity of the professing Hebrews, (Heb. vi. 9, 10.) We may see nothing in a man, *but that he may be* a good man; there may appear nothing in his life and conversation inconsistent with his being godly, and yet neither any great positive evidence *that he is* so. But there may be great positive appearances of holiness in men's visible behaviour: their life devoted to the service of God. They may appear to follow the example of Jesus Christ, and come up in a great measure to those excellent rules in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, and 12th of Romans, and many other parts of the New Testament. There may be a great appearance of their being *universal* in their obedience to Christ's commands and the rules of the gospel; in the performance of the duties of the first table, manifesting the fear and love of God; and also universal in fulfilling rules of love to men, love to saints, and love to enemies; rules of meekness and forgiveness, rules of mercy and charity, and looking not only at our own things, but also at the things of others; rules of doing good to men's souls and bodies, to particular persons and to the public; rules of temperance and mortification, and of an humble conversation; rules of bridling the tongue, and improving it to glorify God and bless men, shewing that in their tongues is the law of kindness. They may appear to walk as Christians, in all *places*, and at all *seasons*; in the house of God, and in their families, among their neighbours, on Sabbath days, and every day, in business and in conversation, towards friends and enemies, towards superiors, inferiors, and equals. Persons in their visible walk may appear to be very earnestly engaged in the service of God and mankind, much to labour and lay out themselves in this work of a Christian, and to be very constant and stedfast in it, under all circumstances and temptations. There may be great manifestations of a spirit to deny themselves, and suffer for God and Christ; the interest of religion, and the benefit of their brethren. There may be great appearances in a man's walk, of a disposition to forsake any thing, rather than to forsake Christ, and to make every thing give place to his honour. There may be great manifestations in a man's behaviour of such religion as this being his element, and of his placing the delight and happiness of his life in it; and his conversation may be such, as to carry with him a sweet odour of Christian graces and heavenly dispositions, wherever he goes. And when it is thus in the professors of Christianity, here is an evidence to others of their sincerity in their profession, to which all other manifestations are not worthy to be compared.

There is doubtless a great variety in the degrees of evidence that professors exhibit of their sincerity, in their life and practice;

as there is a variety in the fairness and clearness of accounts persons give of the manner and method of their experiences; but undoubtedly such a manifestation as has been described, of a Christian spirit in practice, is vastly beyond the fairest and brightest story of particular steps and passages of experience, that ever was told. And in general, a manifestation of the sincerity of a Christian profession in practice, is far better than a relation of experiences.—But yet,

Thirdly, It must be noted agreeable to what was formerly observed, that no external appearances whatsoever, that are visible to the world, are infallible evidences of grace. The manifestations that have been mentioned, are the best that mankind can have; and they are such as oblige Christians entirely to embrace professors as saints, to love and rejoice in them as the children of God; and they are sufficient to give as great satisfaction concerning them as ever is needful to guide them in their conduct, or for any purpose that needs to be answered in this world. But nothing that appears to them in their neighbour, can be sufficient to beget an *absolute certainty* concerning the state of his soul. They see not his heart, nor can they see all his external behaviour; for much of it is in *secret*, and hid from the eye of the world: and it is impossible certainly to determine, how far a man may go in many external appearances and imitations of grace, from other principles. Though undoubtedly, if others could see so much of what belongs to men's practice, as their own consciences may know of it, it might be an infallible evidence of their state, as will appear from what follows.

SECT. XIV.

Christian practice is a distinguishing and sure evidence of grace to persons' own consciences.

This is very plain in 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* And the testimony of our consciences, with respect to our good deeds, is spoken of as that which may give us assurance of our own godliness; 1 John iii. 18, 19. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed,* (in the original it is ΕΡΓΩ *in work,) and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* And the apostle Paul, (Heb. vi.) speaks of *the work and labour of love* of the Christian Hebrews, as that which both gave him a persuasion that they had something above the highest common illuminations, and also as that evidence which tended to give them the highest assurance of hope concern-

ing themselves; ver. 9, &c. *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.* So the apostle directs the Galatians to examine their behaviour or practice, that they might have rejoicing in themselves, in their own happy state; Gal. vi. 4. *Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another.* And the Psalmist says, Psal. cxix. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments; i. e.* then shall I be bold, and assured, end stedfast in my hope. And in that of our Saviour, Matth. vii. 19, 20. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* Though Christ gives this, first, as a rule by which we should judge of others, yet in the words that next follow, he plainly shews, that he intends it also as a rule by which we should judge ourselves; *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that* DOTH THE WILL *of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c.——And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me,* YE THAT WORK INIQUITY. *Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and* DOTH *them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.——And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and* DOTH THEM NOT, *shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand.* I shall have occasion to mention other texts that shew the same thing, hereafter.

But for the greater clearness in this matter, I would *first*, shew how Christian practice, doing good works, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure sign to our *own* consciences, that we are real Christians. And, *secondly*, will prove, that this is the chief of all evidences that men can have of their own sincere godliness.

First, I would shew how Christian practice, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure evidence to our own consciences, that we are sincere Christians.

And here I would observe, that we cannot reasonably suppose, when the scripture in this case speaks of good works, good fruit, and keeping Christ's commandments, that it has respect merely to what is *external*, or the motion and action of the body, without including respect to any aim or intention of the agent, or any act of his understanding or will. For consider men's actions so, and

they are no more good works or acts of obedience, than the regular motions of a clock; nor are they considered as any human actions at all. The actions of the body, taken thus, are neither acts of obedience, nor disobedience; any more than the motions of the body in a convulsion. But the obedience and fruit that is spoken of, is the obedience and fruit of the man; and therefore not only the acts of the body, but the obedience of the soul, consisting in the acts and practice of the soul. Not that I suppose, that when the scripture speaks, in this case, of gracious works, fruit and practice, that in these expressions is included all inward piety and holiness of heart, both principle and exercise, both spirit and practice: because then, in these things being given as signs of a gracious principle in the heart, the same thing would be given as a sign of itself, and there would be no distinction between root and fruit. But only the gracious exercise, and holy act of the soul is meant, and given as the sign of the holy principle, and good estate. Neither is every kind of inward exercise of grace meant; but the practical exercise, that exercise of the soul, and exertion of inward holiness, which there is in an obediential act; or that exertion of the mind, and act of grace, which issues and terminates in what they call the imperate acts of the will; in which something is directed and commanded by the soul to be done, and brought to pass in practice.

Here, for a clearer understanding, I would observe, that there are two kinds of exercises of grace. 1. There are what some call *immanent* acts; that is, those exercises of grace that remain within the soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to any thing to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice. Such are the exercises of grace, which the saints often have in *contemplation:* when the exercise in the heart, does not directly proceed *to*, or terminate *in* any thing beyond the thoughts of the mind: however they may tend to practice (as all exercises of graces do) more remotely. 2. There are acts of grace, that are more strictly called *practical*, or effective exercises; because they immediately respect something to be *done*. They are the exertions of grace in the commanding acts of the will, directing the outward actions. As when a saint gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, in and from the exercise of the grace of charity; or voluntarily endures persecution, in the way of his duty, immediately from the exercise of a supreme love to Christ. Here is the exertion of grace producing its effect in outward actions. These exercises of grace are practical and productive of good works, not only because they are of a *productive nature*, (for so are all exercises of true grace,) but they are the *producing* acts. This is properly the exercise of grace in the act of t[illegible]: and this is properly the practice of the soul. And th[illegible] im-

mediate actor of no other practice but this: the motions of the body follow from the laws of union between the soul and body, which God, and not the soul, has fixed, and does maintain. The act of the soul, and the exercise of grace, exerted in the performance of a good work, is the good work itself, so far as the soul is concerned in it, or so far as it is the soul's good work. The determinations of the will, are indeed our very actions, so far as they are properly ours, as Dr. DODDRIDGE observes*. In this practice of the soul, is included the aim and intention of the soul which is the agent. For not only should we not look on the motions of a statue, doing justice or distributing alms by clock-work, as any acts of obedience to Christ in that statue; but neither would any body call the voluntary actions of a man, externally and materially agreeable to a command of Christ, by the name of obedience to Christ, if he had never heard of Christ, or any of his commands, or had no thought of his commands in what he did. If the acts of obedience and good fruits spoken of, be looked upon, not as mere motions of the body, but as acts of the soul, the whole exercise of the spirit of the mind, in the action, must be taken in, with the end acted for, and the respect the soul then has to God, &c. otherwise they are no acts of denial of ourselves, or obedience to God, or service done to him, but something else. Such effective exercises of grace as these, many of the martyrs have experienced in a high degree. And all true saints live a life of such acts of grace as these; as they all live a life of gracious works, of which these operative exertions of grace are the life and soul. And this is the obedience and fruit that God mainly looks at, as he looks at the soul, more than the body; as much as the soul, in the constitution of human nature, is the superior part. As God looks at the obedience and practice of the man, he looks at the practice of the soul; for the soul is the man in God's sight, *For the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for he looketh on the heart.*

And thus it is, that obedience, good works, and good fruit, are to be taken, when given in scripture, as a sure evidence to our own consciences of a true principle of grace; even as including the obedience and practice of the soul, as preceding and governing the actions of the body. When practice is given in scripture as the main evidence of our true Christianity to *others*, then is meant *that* in our practice which is visible to them, even our outward actions: but when practice is given as a sure evidence of our real Christianity to our own *consciences*, then is meant *that* in our practice which is visible to our own consciences; which is not only the motion of our bodies, but the exertion and exercise

* Scripture-doctrine of Salvation, Sermon I. p. 11.

of the soul, which directs and commands that motion; which is more directly and immediately under the view of our own consciences, than the act of the body. And that this is the intent of scripture, not only does the nature and reason of the thing shew, but it is plain by the scripture itself. Thus it is evident that when Christ at the conclusion of his sermon on the mount, speaks of *doing*, or practising those sayings of his, as the grand sign of professors being true disciples; *without* which he likens them to a man that built his house upon the sand; and *with* which, to a man that built his house upon a rock; he has respect, not only to the outward behaviour, but to the inward exercise of the mind in that behaviour. This is evident by observing what those preceding sayings of his are; *Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart: whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause*, &c.; *whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her*, &c.; *love your enemies; take no thought for your life*, and others of the like nature, which imply inward exercises: and when Christ says, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;* he has evidently a special respect to that command several times repeated in the same discourse, (which he calls, by way of eminence, *his commandment*), *that they should love one another, as he had loved them.* (See chap. xiii. 34, 35, and chap. xv. 10, 12, 13, 14.) But this command respects chiefly an exercise of the mind or heart, though exerted in practice. So when the apostle John says, 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments;* he has plainly a principal respect to the same command, as appears by what follows, ver. 7—11, and 2d Epist. ver. 5, 6: and when we are told in scripture that men shall at the last day be judged *according to their works*, and *all shall receive according to the things done in the body;* it is not to be understood only of *outward* acts; for if so, why is God so often spoken of as searching the hearts and trying the reins, *that he may render to every one according to his works?* as Rev. ii. 23. *And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one according to his works.* Jer. xvii. 3, 10. *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* But if by *his ways, and the fruit of his doings*, is meant only the actions of his body, what need of *searching the heart and reins*, in order to know them? Hezekiah in his sickness pleads his practice as an evidence of his title to God's favour, as including not only his outward actions, but what was in his heart, Is. xxxviii. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, I*

beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.

Though in this great evidence of sincerity that the scripture gives us, what is inward is of greatest importance; yet what is outward is included and intended, as connected with the practical exertion of grace in the will, directing and commanding the actions of the body. And hereby are effectually cut off all pretensions that any man can have to evidences of godliness, who externally lives wickedly: because the great evidence lies in that inward exercise and practice of the soul, which consists in the act of the will, commanding outward acts. But it is known, that these commanding acts of the will are not one way, and the actions of the bodily organs another: for the unalterable law of nature is, that they should be united, as long as soul and body are united, and the organs are not so destroyed as to be incapable of those motions that the soul commands. Thus it would be ridiculous for a man to plead, that the commanding act of his will was to go to the public worship, while his feet carry him to a tavern or brothel-house; or that the commanding act of his will was to give such a piece of money he had in his hand to a poor beggar, while his hand at the same instant kept it back, and held it fast.

Secondly, I proceed to shew, that Christian practice, taken in the sense explained, is *the chief* of all the evidences of a saving sincerity in religion, to the consciences of the professors of it; much to be preferred to the method of the first convictions, enlightenings, and comforts in conversion; or any imminent discoveries or exercises of grace whatsoever, that begin and end in contemplation*. The evidence of this appears by the following arguments.

† "Look upon John, Christ's beloved disciple and bosom companion; he had received the anointing to know him that is true, 'and he knew that he knew him.' 1 John ii. 3. But how did he know that? He might be deceived; (as it is strange to see what a melancholy fancy will do, and the effects of it: as honest men are reputed to have weak brains, and never saw the depths of the secrets of God;) what is his *last* proof? "Because we keep his commandments." Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 131.

"A man may know his present union to the Lord Jesus, by a work: 1 John ii. 4. 'He that saith I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar.'—Yea, that is true negatively; but may a man, ought a man, to see or know his union positively by this? Ans. ver. 5. Many said they did know and love the Lord, but 'he that keeps his words.'—O they are sweet! It is heaven to cleave to him in every command; it is death to depart from any command: 'hereby know we that we are in him.' If it were possible to ask of angels, how they know they are not devils, they would answer, the Lord's will is ours." Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 134.

"If the question be, Whom doth the Lord Jesus love? you need not go to heaven for it, the word is nigh thee, 'Those that love Christ.' Who are those? 'Those that keep his commandments.'" Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 138.

"Will you have Christ sit in heaven, and not look that he subdue your lusts by the work of his grace, and so sway your hearts? You despise his kingdom then. Do you seek for pardon in the blood of Christ, and never look for the virtue and end of that blood to wash you and make you without spot, &c.? You despise his

Argument I. *Reason* plainly shews, that those things which put it to the proof, what men will actually cleave to in their *practice*, when left to follow their own choice and inclinations, are the proper trial what they do really prefer in their hearts. Sincerity in religion, as observed already, consists in setting God highest in the heart, in choosing him before other things, in having a heart to sell all for Christ, &c.—But a man's actions are the proper trial what a man's heart prefers. As for instance, when God and other things come to stand in competition, God is as it were set before a man on one hand, and his worldly interest or pleasure on the other; his behaviour in such case, in actually cleaving to the one and forsaking the other, is the proper trial which he prefers. Sincerity consists in forsaking all for Christ in heart; but to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the very same thing as to have a heart to forsake all for Christ. The proper trial whether a man has a heart to forsake all for Christ, is his being actually put to it, Christ and other things coming in competition, that he *must* practically cleave to one and forsake the other. To forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart to forsake all for Christ when *called* to it; but the highest proof to ourselves and others, that we have a heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it, is *actually doing* it when or so far as called to it. To follow Christ in heart, is to have a heart to follow him. To deny ourselves in heart for Christ, is the same thing as to have a *heart* to deny ourselves for him in *fact*. The main and most proper proof of a man having a *heart* to any thing, concerning which he is at liberty to follow his own inclinations, is his *doing* it. When a man is at liberty whether to speak or keep silence, the most proper evidence of his having a *heart* to speak, is his *speaking*. When a man is at liberty whether to walk or sit still, the proper proof of his having a heart to walk, is his walking. Godliness consists not in a heart to *intend* to do the will of God, but in a heart to do it. The children of Israel in the wilderness had the former, of whom we read, Deut. v. 27—29. *Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an* HEART *in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and*

priesthood and blood then. Do you look for Christ to do work for you, and you not do Christ's work, and bring forth fruit to him? You despise his honour then, John xv. 8. If I were to discover a hypocrite, or a false heart, this I would say, It is he that shall set up Christ, but loath his work." Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 140.

with their children for ever! The people manifested that they had *a heart to* INTEND *to keep God's commandments*, and to be very forward in those intentions; but God manifests, that this was far from being the thing he desired, wherein true godliness consists, even *an heart actually to keep them.*

It is therefore exceedingly absurd, and even ridiculous, for any to pretend that they have a good heart, while they live a wicked life, or do not bring forth the fruit of universal holiness in their practice. For it is proved in fact, that such men do not love God above all. It is foolish to dispute against plain fact and experience. Men that live in ways of sin, and yet flatter themselves that they shall go to heaven, or expect to be received hereafter as holy persons, without a holy life and practice, act as though they expected to make a fool of their Judge. Which is implied in what the apostle says, Gal. vi. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* As much as to say, "Do not deceive yourselves with an expectation of reaping life everlasting hereafter, if you sow not to the Spirit here; it is in vain to think that God will be made a fool of by you, that he will be imposed upon with shadows instead of substance, and with vain pretences, instead of that good fruit which he expects; when the contrary to what you pretend appears plainly in your life, before his face." In this manner the word *mock* is sometimes used in scripture. Thus Delilah says to Sampson, *Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies*, Judges xvi. 10, 13. *i. e.* "Thou hast baffled me, intending to make a fool of me, as if I might be easily turned off with any vain pretence, instead of the truth." So it is said that Lot, when he told his sons-in-law that God would destroy that place, *he seemed as one that mocked to his sons-in-law*, Gen. xix. 14. *i. e.* he seemed as one that would make a game of them, as though they were credulous fools. But the great Judge, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will not be mocked or baffled with any pretences, without a holy life. If in his name men have prophesied and wrought miracles, and have had faith so that they could remove mountains, and cast out devils, and however high their religious affections have been, however great resemblances they have had of grace, and though their hiding place has been so dark and deep, that no human skill nor search could find them out; yet if they are *workers* or *practisers of iniquity*, they cannot hide their hypocrisy from their Judge; Job xxxiv. 22. *There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the* WORKERS OF INIQUITY *may hide themselves.* Would a wise prince suffer himself to be mocked by a subject, who should pretend that he was loyal, and should tell his prince that he had an entire affection for him, and that at such and such a time he had experience of it, and felt his affections strongly working towards

him, and should come expecting to be accepted and rewarded by his prince, as one of his best friends on that account, though he lived in rebellion against him, following some pretender to his crown, and from time to time stirring up sedition against him? Or, would a master suffer himself to be shammed and gulled by a servant, that should pretend to great experiences of love and honour towards him in his heart, and a great sense of his worthiness and kindness, when at the same time he refused to obey and serve him?

Argument II. As *reason* shews, that those things which occur in the course of life, which put it to the proof whether men will prefer God to other things in *practice*, are the proper trial of the sincerity of their *hearts;* so the same are represented as the proper trial of the sincerity of professors, in the *scripture*. There we find that such things are called by that very name, *trials*, or *temptations*, both words of the same signification.——The things that put it to the proof, whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the difficulties of religion, or those things which occur that make the practice of duty difficult, and cross to other principles besides the love of God; because in them, God and other things are both set before men together, for their actual and practical choice; and it comes to this, that we cannot hold to both, but one or the other must be forsaken. And these things are all over the scripture called by the name of *trials* or *proofs**. And they are called by this name, because hereby professors are tried and proved of what sort they be, whether they be really what they profess and appear to be; and because in them, the reality of a supreme love to God is brought to the test of experiment and fact; they are the proper proofs, in which it is truly determined by experience, whether men have a thorough disposition of heart to cleave to God or no; Deut. viii. 2. *And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no,* Judg. ii. 21, 22. *I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them, of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord.* So chap. iii. 1, 4. and Exod. xvi. 4. And the scripture, when it calls these difficulties of religion by the name of temptations or trials, explains itself to mean thereby, the trial or experiment of their *faith*, Jam. i. 2, 3. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith*

* 2 Cor. viii. 2. Heb. xi. 36. 1 Pet. i. 7. Chap. iv. 12. Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. viii. 2, 16. Chap. xiii. 3. Exod. xv. 35. Chap. xvi. 4. Judges ii. 22. Chap. iii. 1, 4. Psal. lxvi. 10, 11, Dan. xii. 10. Rev. iii. 10. Job xxiii. 10. Zech. xiii. 2. Jam. i. 12. Rev. ii. 10. Luke viii. 13. Acts xx. 19. Jam. i. 2, 3. 1 Pet. i. 5.

worketh patience. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. *Now for a season—ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold, &c.* So the apostle Paul speaks of that expensive duty of parting with our substance to the poor, as the proof of the *sincerity* of the love of Christians, 2 Cor. viii. 8. And the difficulties of religion are often represented in scripture as being the trial of professors, in the same manner that the furnace is the proper trial of gold and silver; Psal. lxvi. 11. *Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried: thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidest affliction upon our loins.* Zech. xiii. 9. *And I will bring the third part of them through the fire; and I will refine them as silver is refined: and I will try them as gold is tried.* That which has the colour and appearance of gold, is put into the furnace to try whether it be what it seems to be, real gold or no. So the difficulties of religion are called trials, because they try those that have the profession and appearance of saints, whether they are what they appear to be, real saints. If we put true gold into the furnace, we shall find its great value and preciousness; so the truth and inestimable value of the virtues of a true Christian appear, when under these trials; 1 Pet. i. 7. *That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory.* True and pure gold will come out of the furnace in full weight: so true saints when tried come forth as gold, Job xxiii. 10. Christ distinguishes true grace from counterfeit by this, that it is *gold tried in the fire,* Rev. iii. 17, 18. So that it is evident that these things are called *trials* in scripture, principally as they try or prove the *sincerity* of professors. And from what has now been observed, it is evident that they are the most proper trial or proof of their sincerity; inasmuch as the very meaning of the word *trial,* as it is ordinarily used in scripture, is the difficulty occurring in the way of a professor's duty, as an experiment of his sincerity. If *trial of sincerity* be the proper name of these difficulties of religion, then doubtless these difficulties of religion are *properly and eminently* the trial of sincerity; for they are doubtless eminently what they are called by the Holy Ghost: God gives things their name from that which is eminently their nature. And if it be so, that these things are the proper and eminent trial, proof or experiment of the sincerity of professors; then certainly the result of the trial or experiment, (that is, persons' behaviour or practice under such trials), is the proper and eminent evidence of their sincerity. For they are called trials or proofs, only with regard to the result, and because the effect is eminently the *proof,* or *evidence.* And this is the most proper proof and evidence to the *conscience* of those that are the subjects of these trials. For when God is said by

these things to *try men, and prove them, to see what is in their hearts, and whether they will keep his commandments or no:* we are not to understand, that it is for his *own* information, or that he may obtain evidence himself of their sincerity; (for he needs no trials for his information); but chiefly for their conviction, and to exhibit evidence to their consciences*. Thus when God is said to prove Israel by the difficulties they met with in the wilderness, and by the difficulties they met with from their enemies in Canaan, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments, or no; it must be understood, that it was to discover them to *themselves*, that they might know what was in their own hearts. So when God tempted or tried Abraham with that difficult command of offering up his son, it was not for his satisfaction, whether he feared God or no, but for Abraham's own greater satisfaction and comfort, and the more clear manifestation of the favour of God to him. When Abraham had proved faithful under this trial, God says to him, *Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.* Which plainly implies, that in this practical exercise of Abraham's grace under this trial, was a clearer evidence of the truth of his grace, than ever was before; and the greatest evidence to Abraham's conscience; because God himself gives it to Abraham as such, for his comfort and rejoicing; and speaks of it to him, as what might be the greatest evidence to his conscience of his being upright in the sight of his Judge. Which proves what I say, that *holy practice* under trials, is the *highest evidence* of the sincerity of professors to their own *consciences.* And we find that Christ frequently took the same method to convince the consciences of those that pretended friendship to him, and to shew them what they were. This was the method he took with the rich young man, Matth. xix. 16. &c. He seemed to shew a great respect to Christ; he came kneeling to him, and called him *good master*, and made a great profession of obedience to the commandments; but Christ tried him by bidding him *go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and take up his cross, and follow him;* telling him, *that then he should have treasure in heaven.* So he tried another, Matth. viii. 20. He made a great profession of respect to Christ: says he, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* Christ immediately puts his friendship to the proof, by telling him that *the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but that the Son of man had not where to lay his head.* And thus Christ is

* "I am persuaded, as Calvin is, that all the several trials of men, are to shew them to themselves, and to the world, that they be but counterfeits; and to make saints known to themselves, the better.—Rom. v. 5. 'Tribulation worketh trial, and that hope.' Prov. xvii. 3. If you will know whether it will hold weight, the trial will tell you."—(Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 191.)

wont still to try professed disciples in general, in the course of his providence. So the seed sown in every kind of ground, stony ground, thorny ground, and good ground, which in all appears alike, when it first springs up; yet is tried, and the difference is made to appear by the burning heat of the sun.

Seeing therefore that these are the things which God employs to try us, it is undoubtedly the surest way, in order to pass a right judgment, to try ourselves by the same things. These trials are not for *his* information, but for *ours;* therefore we ought to receive our information from thence. The surest way to know our gold, is to examine it in God's furnace, where he tries it for that very end, that *we may see* what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building stands strong or no, we must look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in form of wheat, has the real substance of wheat, or be only chaff, we must observe it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a staff be strong or a rotten broken reed, we must observe it when it is leaned on, when weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourselves justly, it must be in God's appointed scales†. The trials in the course of our practice, are as it were

† Dr. Sibbs, in his *Bruised Reed*, says, "When Christ's will cometh in competition with any worldly loss or gain, yet if then, in that particular case, the heart will stoop to Christ, it is a true sign. For the truest trial of the power of grace is in such particular cases as touch us nearest; for there our corruption maketh the greatest head. When Christ came home to the young man in the gospel, he lost a disciple of him."

Mr. Flavel speaks of a holy practice under trials, as the greatest evidence of grace. "No man (says he) can say what he is, whether his grace be true or false, until they be *tried*, and examined by those things, which are to them as fire is to gold." *Touchstone of Sincerity*, chap. iv. sect. 1. Again, speaking of great difficulties and sufferings in the way of duty, wherein a person must actually part with what is dearest of a worldly nature, or with his duty, he says, "That such sufferings as these will discover the falseness and rottenness of men's hearts, cannot be doubted; if you consider, that this is the fire designed by God for this very same purpose, to separate the gold from the dross. So you will find it, 1 Pet. iv. 12—'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you.' i. e. The very design and aim of Providence in permitting and ordering them, is to try you. Upon this account you find the hour of persecution (in a suitable sense) called the hour of temptation or probation, Rev. iii. 10. For then, professors are sifted to the very bran, searched to the very bottom principles. This is 'the day that burns as an oven; all that do wickedly shall be as stubble,' Mal. iv. 1. For in that day the predominant interest must appear and be discovered, it can be no more concealed no longer. 'No man can serve two masters,' saith Christ, Luke xvi. 13. A man may serve many masters, if they all command the same thing, or things subordinate to each other; but he cannot serve two masters, if their commands clash and interfere with each other; and such are the commands of Christ and the flesh in a suffering hour;—thus the two interests come in full opposition. Let now have but patience and wait a little, and you will discern which is predominant. A dog follows two men, while they both walk one way, and you know not which of the two is his master; stay but a little, until their path parts, and then you shall quickly see who is his master: so it is in this case." *Ibid.* chap. viii. And in another chapter he says, "Great numbers of persons are deceived and destroyed by trusting to seeming untried grace. This was the miserable condition of the Laodicean professors: they reckoned themselves rich, but were really poor

the balances in which our hearts are weighed, or in which Christ and the world, or Christ and his competitors, as to the esteem and regard they have in our hearts, are weighed, or are put into opposite scales, by which there is opportunity to see which preponderates. When a man is brought to the dividing of paths, the one of which leads to Christ, and the other to the objects of his lusts, to see which way he will go; when set as it were between Christ and the world, Christ on the right hand, and the world on the left, so that if he goes to one he must leave the other: this is just the same thing as laying Christ and the world in two opposite scales: and his going to the one, and leaving the other, is just the same thing, as the sinking of one scale, and rising of the other. A man's practice, therefore, under the trials of God's providence, is as much the proper experiment and evidence of the superior inclination of his heart, as the motion of the balance, with different weights in opposite scales, is the proper experiment of the superior weight.

Argument III. Another argument, that holy practice, in the sense which has been explained, is the highest kind of evidence of the truth of grace to the consciences of Christians, is that in *practice*, grace in scripture style is said to be *made perfect*, or to be *finished*. So the apostle James says, Jam. ii. 22. *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect*, or *finished?* So the love of God is said to be made perfect, or finished, in keeping his commandments; 1 John ii. 4, 5. *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar: and the truth is not in him: but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.* The commandment of Christ which the apostle has a special respect to, is that which respects deeds of love to our brethren; as appears by the following verses. Again, the love of God is said to be *perfected*, in the same sense, chap. iv. 12. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* Here doubtless the apos-

all is not gold that glisters; their gold (as they accounted it) was never tried in the fire. If a man's whole estate lay in some precious stone, suppose a rich diamond, how is he concerned to have it thoroughly tried, to see whether it will bear a smart stroke with the hammer, or fly like a Bristol diamond!" Ibid. chap. x. § 3. Again, in the same place, "The promises of salvation are made over to tried grace, and that only as will endure the trial."

"The Lord will try you. God hath his trying times; and they were never sent, but to discover who were dross, who were gold. And the main end of all God's trials, is to discover this truth that I now am pressing upon you. Some have a thorough work; and now the trial discovers the truth, as in Abraham, Heb. xi. 17. Some have a superficial work, and they fall in trial, as in Saul; and it doth discover it was but an overly work. For this is the question God makes, Is it thorough, or no? Ay, saith the carnal heart; Yes, saith the gracious heart. Hence it is strange to see what men will do when a *trial* comes." Shepard's *Parable*, Part I. p. 219.

"There is an hour of temptation which tries men, which will discover men indeed."—*Ibid.* Part II. p. 60.

tle has still respect to loving one another, in the same manner that he had explained in the preceding chapter, speaking of loving one another as a *sign* of the love of God, ver. 17, 18. *Whoso hath this world's good, and shutteth up his bowels, &c. how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed,* (or in work), *and in truth.* By thus *loving in work,* the apostle says *the love of God is* PERFECTED *in us.* Grace is said to be *perfected* or *finished* in holy practice, as therein it is brought to its proper effect, and to that exercise which is the *end* of the principle; the tendency and design of grace herein is reached, and its operation completed and crowned. The tree is not perfected in the seed being planted in the ground; in the first quickening of the seed, and in its putting forth root and sprout; nor is it perfected when it comes up out of the ground; in bringing forth leaves; nor yet in putting forth blossoms: but when it has brought forth good ripe *fruit,* then it is *perfected,* therein it reaches its *end,* the design is *finished:* all that belongs to the tree is *completed* and brought to its proper effect in the *fruit.* So is grace in its practical exercises. Grace is said to be made perfect or finished in its work or fruit, in the same manner as it is said of sin, Jam. i. 15. *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Here are three steps; *first,* sin in its *principle* or habit, the being of lust in the heart; and *nextly,* here is its conceiving, consisting in the *imminent exercises* of it in the mind; and *lastly,* here is the fruit that was conceived actually brought forth, in the wicked work and *practice.* And this the apostle calls the *finishing* or *perfecting* of sin; for the word in the original is the same that is translated *perfected* in those forementioned places.

Now certainly, if grace be in this manner made perfect in its fruit, if these practical exercises of grace are those wherein grace is brought to its proper effect and end, and the exercises wherein whatsoever belongs to its design, tendency and operation, is completed and crowned; then these exercises must be the highest evidences of grace, above all other exercises. Certainly the proper nature and tendency of every principle, must appear best and most fully, in its most perfect exercises, or in those wherein its nature is most completely exerted, and its tendency most fully answered and crowned, in its proper effect and end. If we would see the proper nature of any thing whatsoever, and see it in its full distinction from other things; let us look upon it in the *finishing* of it. The apostle James says, *by works is faith made perfect;* and introduces this as an argument to prove that works are the chief evidence of faith, whereby the sincerity of the professors of faith is justified, Jam. ii. And the apostle John, after

he had once and again told us, that love was made perfect in keeping Christ's commandments, observes, 1 John iv. 18. *That perfect love casteth out fear;* meaning (at least in part) love made perfect in this sense; agreeable to what he had said in the foregoing chapter, *That by love in deed, or work, we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts*, ver. 18, 19.

Argument IV. Another thing which makes it evident, that holy *practice* is the principal evidence that we ought to use in judging both of our own and others sincerity, is, that this evidence is *above all others* insisted on in scripture. A common acquaintance with the scripture, together with a little attention and observation, will be sufficient to shew to any one, that this is ten times more insisted on as a note of true piety, throughout the scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations, than any thing else. And in the New Testament, where Christ and his apostles do expressly, and of declared purpose, lay down signs of true godliness, this is almost wholly insisted on. It may be observed, that Christ and his apostles do not only *often* say those things, in discoursing on the great doctrines of religion, which do shew what the nature of true godliness must be, or from whence the nature and signs of it may be inferred by just consequence—and often occasionally mention many things which appertain to godliness—but they also often *of set purpose* give signs and marks for the trial of professors, putting them upon trying themselves by the signs they give, introducing what they say with such like expressions as these; *By this you shall know that you know God: By this are manifest the children of God, and the children of the devil: He that hath this, builds on a good foundation: he that hath it not, builds on the sand: Hereby we shall assure our hearts: He is the man that loveth Christ, &c.* But I can find no place, where either Christ or his apostles in this manner give signs of godliness, (though the places are many) but where Christian practice is almost the only thing insisted on. Indeed in many of these places, *love to the brethren* is spoken of as a sign of godliness; and (as I have observed before) there is no one virtuous affection or disposition so often expressly spoken of as a sign of true grace, as our having love one to another: but then the scriptures explain themselves to intend chiefly this love as exercised and expressed in *practice*, or in deeds of love. So does the apostle John (who above all others insists on love to the brethren as a sign of godliness) most expressly explain himself, in that 1 John iii. 14, &c. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.—Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My*

little children, let us love, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, (i. e. in deeds of love) *and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* So that when the scripture so much insists on our loving one another, as a great sign of godliness, we are not thereby to understand the imminent workings of affection which men feel one to another, so much as the soul's practising all the duties of the second table of the law; all which the New Testament tells us again and again, a true love one to another comprehends; Rom. xiii. 8. and 10. Gal. v. 14. Matth. xxii. 39, 40. So that really there is no place in the New Testament, where the declared design is to give signs of godliness, but that holy practice, or keeping Christ's commandments, is the mark insisted on. Which is an invincible argument, that it is the *chief* of all the evidences of godliness: unless we suppose, that Christ and his apostles did not know how to choose signs so well as we could have chosen for them. But if we make the word of Christ our rule, then undoubtedly those marks which Christ and his apostles chiefly lay down, that we might try ourselves by them, those same marks we ought especially to receive, and chiefly to use, in the trial of ourselves*. And surely those things which Christ and his apostles *chiefly* insisted on in the rules they gave, *ministers* ought chiefly to insist on in the rules they give. To insist *much* on those things on which the scripture insists little, and to insist very *little* on those things on which the scripture insists much, is a dangerous thing; because it is going out of God's way, and is to judge ourselves, and guide others, in an *unscriptural* manner. God knew which way of leading and guiding souls was safest and best for them; he insisted so much on some things, because he knew it to be needful that they should be insisted on; and let other things more alone, as a wise God, because he knew it was not best for us, so much to lay the weight of the trial there. As the Sabbath was made for man, so the scriptures were made for man; and they are by infinite wisdom fitted for our use and benefit. We should therefore make them our guide in all things, in our thought of religion, and of ourselves. And for us to make that great which the scripture makes little, and that little which the scripture makes great, tends to give us a monstrous idea of religion; and (at least indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right rule, and from a right opinion of ourselves, and to establish delusion and hypocrisy.

Argument V. Christian practice *is plainly spoken of* in the *word of God*, as the main evidence of the truth of grace, not only

† "It is a sure rule, (says Dr. Preston) that what the scriptures bestow much words on, we should have much thought on; and what the Holy Ghost urgeth most, we should prize most."—*Church's Carriage.*

to others, but to men's own consciences. It is not only *more* spoken of and insisted on than other signs, but in many places where it is spoken of, it is represented as the chief of all evidences. This is plain in the manner of expression from time to time. If God were now to speak from heaven to resolve our doubts concerning signs of godliness, and should give some particular sign, that by it all might know whether they were sincerely godly or not, with such emphatical expressions as these, The man who hath such a qualification or mark, *that is the man who is a true saint; that is the very man; by this you may know; this is the thing by which it is manifest who are saints and who are sinners, such men as these are saints indeed;* should not we look upon it as a thing beyond doubt, that this was given as a special, and eminently distinguishing note of true godliness? But this is the very case with respect to the sign of grace I am speaking of; God has again and again uttered himself in his word in this very manner, concerning Christian practice, as John xiv. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them,* HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME. This Christ gives to his disciples, not so much to guide them in judging others, but to apply to themselves for their own comfort after his departure, as appears by every word of the context. And by the way I would observe, that not only the emphasis with which Christ utters himself is remarkable, but also his so much insisting on, and repeating the matter, as he does in the context; ver. 15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* Ver. 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words.* And ver. 24. *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.* And in the next chapter, over and over; ver. 2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it.* Ver. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.* Ver. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* We have this mark laid down with the same emphasis again, John viii. 31. *If ye continue in my word,* THEN *are ye my disciples* INDEED. And again, 1 John ii. 3. HEREBY *we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* And ver. 5. *Whoso keepeth his word,* IN HIM VERILY *is the love of God perfected:* HEREBY *know we that we are in him,* And chap. iii. 18, 19. *Let us love in deed, and in truth:* HEREBY *we know that we are of the truth.* What is translated *hereby,* would have been a little more emphatical, if it had been rendered more literally from the original, BY THIS *we do know.*—And how evidently is holy practice spoken of as the grand note of distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil, in ver. 10. of the same chapter? IN THIS *the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.* Speaking of a holy, and a wicked practice, as may be seen in all

the context: as ver. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* Ver. 6—10. *Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth sin, is of the devil.—Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not.—Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God.* So we have the like emphasis, 2 John 6. THIS IS LOVE, *that we walk after his commandments*; that is, (as we must understand it,) *This is the proper evidence of love.* So 1 John v. 3. THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, *that we keep his commandments.* So the apostle James speaking of the proper evidences of true and pure religion, says, Jam. i. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father,* IS THIS, *To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* We have the like emphatical expressions used about the same thing in the Old Testament; Job xxviii. 28. *And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* Jer. xxii. 15, 16. *Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice? He judged the cause of the poor and needy. was not this to know me? saith the Lord.* Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. *Come ye children unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile: depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it.* Psal. xv. at the beginning, *Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly,* &c. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,* &c. Psal. cxix. 1. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* Ver. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.* Prov. viii. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.*

The scripture never uses any such emphatical expressions concerning any other signs of hypocrisy, and unsoundness of heart as concerning an *unholy practice.* So Gal. vi. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters,* &c. *shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Eph. v. 5, 6. *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person,* &c. *hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words.* 1 John iii. 7, 8. *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth sin, is of the devil.* Chap. ii. 4. *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* And chap. i. 6. *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.* James i. 26. *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* Chap. iii. 14, 15. *If ye have bitter envyings and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdo[illegible]th not from ab[illegible]ve, but is earthly, sen-*

sual, devilish. Psal. cxxv. 5. ***As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.*** Is. xxxv. 8. ***An high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it.*** Rev. xxi. 27. ***And there shall in no wise enter into it, whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.*** And in many places, ***Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity.***

Argument VI. Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the chief of all the signs of the sincerity of professors, not only to the world, but to their own consciences, is, that this is the grand evidence which will hereafter be made use of, before the judgment-seat of God; according to which his judgment will be regulated, and the state of every professor of religion unalterably determined. In the future judgment, there will be an open trial of professors; and evidences will be made use of in the judgment. For God's future judging of men, in order to their eternal retribution, will not be his trying and finding out, and passing a judgment upon the state of men's hearts, in his *own* mind; but it will be a *declarative* judgment: and the end of it will be, not God's forming a judgment within himself, but the *manifestation* of his judgment, and the righteousness of it, to men's own consciences and to the world. And therefore the day of judgment is called *the day of the* revelation *of the righteous judgment of God*, Rom. ii. 5. And the end of God's future trial and judgment of men, as to the part that each one in particular is to have in the judgment, will be especially the clear manifestation of God's righteous judgment to his conscience*. And therefore though God needs no medium, whereby to make the truth evident to himself, yet evidences will be exhibited in his future judging of men. And doubtless the evidences used in their trial, will be such as are best fitted to serve the *ends* of the judgment; viz. the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, not only to the world, but to men's own consciences. But the scriptures abundantly teach us, that the grand evidences which the Judge will make use of in the trial, for these ends, according to which the judgment of every one shall be regulated, and the irreversible sentence passed, will be men's works, or *practice*, in this world; Rev. xx. 12. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* So ver. 13. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* 2 Cor. v. 10. *For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of*

* As is manifest by Matth. xviii. 31. to the end. Chap. xx. 8—15. Chap. xxii. 11, 12, 13. Chap. xxv. 19—30. and ver. 35. to the end. Luke xix. 15—23.

Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad. So men's practice is the *only* evidence that Christ represents the future judgment as regulated by, in that most particular description of the day of judgment, which we have in the holy Bible*. The Judge then, will not examine men, as to the method of their experiences, or set every man to tell his story of the *manner* of his conversion, but his *works* will be brought forth, as evidences of what he is, what he has done in darkness and in light; Eccl. xii. 14. *For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* In the *trial* of professors at the future judgment, God will call in the same evidences, to manifest them to themselves and to the world, which he makes use of to manifest them, in the temptations or trials of his providence here, viz. their *practice*, in cases wherein Christ and other things come into actual and immediate competition. God, then, for the manifestation of his righteous judgment, will weigh professors in a balance that is *visible;* the same that he weighs men in now; which has been already described.

Hence we may undoubtedly infer, that men's works (taken in the sense explained) are the highest evidences by which they ought to try themselves. Certainly that which our Supreme Judge will *chiefly* use, when we come to stand before him, we should chiefly adopt, in order to judge ourselves by†. If it had not been revealed in what manner, and by what evidence the Judge would proceed with us hereafter, how natural would it be for one to say, "O that I knew what token God will chiefly look for, and insist upon, in the last and decisive judgment; and which he expects that all should be able to *produce*, who would then be accepted of him, and according to which sentence shall be passed; that I might know what evidence especially to seek after now, as I would be sure not to fail then." And seeing God has so plainly and abundantly revealed what this evidence is, surely, if we act wisely, we shall regard it as of the greatest importance.

Now from all that has been said, I think it abundantly manifest, that Christian *practice* is the most proper evidence of the gracious sincerity of professors, to *themselves* and *others:* and the chief of all the marks of grace, the sign of signs, and evidence of evidences, that which seals and crowns all other signs.—I had re-

* See Matth. xxv. at the latter end. See also Rom. ii. 6—13. Jer. xvii. 10. Job xxxiv. 11. Prov. xxiv. 12. Jer. xxxii. 19. Rev. xxii. 12. Matth. xvi. 27. Rev. ii. 23. Ezek. xxxiii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 17.

† "That which God maketh a rule of his own judgment, as that by which he judgeth of every man, that is a sure rule for every man to judge himself by. That which we shall be judged by at the last day, is a sure rule to apply to ourselves for the present. Now by our obedience and works he judgeth us. "He will give to every man according to his works." Dr. Preston's *Church Carriage.*

ther have the testimony of my conscience, that I have such a saying of my Supreme Judge on my side, as that, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;* than the judgment and fullest approbation of all the wise, sound, and experienced divines, that have lived this thousand years, on the most exact and critical examination of my experiences, as to the *manner* of my conversion. Not that there are no *other* good evidences of a state of grace but this. There may be other exercises of grace, besides these efficient exercises, which the saints may have in contemplation, that may be very satisfying to them: but yet this is the *chief* and most proper evidence. There may be several good evidences that a tree is a fig-tree; but the *highest* and most proper evidence of it is, that it actually *bears* figs. It is possible, that a man may have a good assurance of a state of grace, at his first conversion, before he has had opportunity to gain assurance by this great evidence I am speaking of.—If a man hears that a great treasure is offered him, in a distant place, on condition that he will prize it so much, as to be willing to leave what he possesses at home, and go a journey for it, over the rocks and mountains that are in the way, to the place where it is; it is possible the man may be well assured, that he values the treasure to the degree spoken of, as soon as the offer is made him; he may feel a willingness to go for the treasure, beyond all doubt; but yet, this does not hinder but that his *actual going* for it, is the *highest* and most proper evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himself. But then as an evidence to himself, his outward actions, and the motions of his body in his journey, are not considered alone, exclusive of the action of his mind, and a consciousness within himself, of the thing that moves him, and the end he goes for; otherwise his bodily motion is no evidence to him, of his prizing the treasure. In such a manner is Christian practice the most proper evidence of a saving value of *the pearl of great price, and treasure hid in the field.*

Christian practice is the *sign of signs*, in this sense, that it is the great evidence which confirms and crowns all other signs of godliness. There is no *one* grace of the Spirit of God, but that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the truth of it. As it is with the members of our bodies, and all our utensils, the proper proof of their soundness and goodness is in the *use* of them; so it is with our graces, (which are given to be used in practice, as much as our hands and feet, or the tools with which we work, the proper trial and proof of them is in their exercise in practice. Most of the things we use are serviceable to us, and so have their serviceableness proved, in some pressure, straining, agitation, or collision. So it is with a bow, a sword, an axe, a saw, a cord, a chain, a staff, a foot, a tooth, &c. And those which are so weak,

as not to bear the strain or pressure we need, to which we put them, are good for nothing. So it is with all the virtues of the mind. The proper trial and proof of them, is in their being exercised under those temptations and trials that God brings us under, in the course of his providence, and in being put to such service as strains hard upon the principles of nature.

Practice is the proper proof of the true and saving *knowledge of God:* as appears by that of the apostle already mentioned, *Hereby we know that we know him, that we keep his commandments.* It is in vain for us to *profess that we know God*, if *in works we deny him*, Tit. i. 16. And if we *know God, but glorify him not as God*, our knowledge will only *condemn*, and not *save* us, Rom. i. 21. The great note of that knowledge which saves and makes happy, is, that it is *practical;* John xiii. 17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Job xxviii. 28. *To depart from evil is understanding.*

Holy practice is the proper evidence of *repentance.* When the Jews professed repentance, when they came confessing their sins to John, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; he directed them to the right way of getting and exhibiting proper evidences of the truth of their repentance, when he said to them, *Bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, Matth. iii. 8. Which was agreeable to the practice of the apostle Paul; see Acts xxvi. 20. Pardon and mercy are constantly promised to him who has this evidence of true repentance, that he forsakes his sin; Prov. xxviii. 13, and Is. lv. 7, and many other places.

Holy practice is the proper evidence of a *saving faith.* It is evident that the apostle James speaks of *works*, as what eminently justifies faith, or (which is the same thing) justifies the professors of faith, and vindicate and manifest the sincerity of their profession, not only to the world, but to their own consciences: as is evident by the instance he gives of Abraham, Jam. ii. 21—24. And in ver. 20 and 26, he speaks of the practical and working nature of faith, as the very life and soul of it; in the same manner, that the active nature and substance, which is in the body of a man, is the life and soul of it. And if so, practice is the proper evidence of the life and soul of true faith, by which it is distinguished from a dead faith. For doubtless, practice is the most proper evidence of a practical nature, and operation the most proper evidence of an operative nature.

Practice is the best evidence of a saving *belief of the truth.* That is spoken of as the proper evidence of the *truth being* in a professing Christian, that *he walks in the truth*, 3 John 3. *I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.*

Practice is the most proper evidence of a true *coming to Christ*, and *accepting* of, and *closing* with him. A true and saving coming to Christ, is (as Christ often teaches) a coming so as to forsake all for him. And, as observed before, to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart actually to forsake all; but the proper evidence of having a heart actually to forsake all, is indeed actually to forsake all when called to it. If a prince make suit to a woman in a far country, that she would forsake her own people, and father's house, and come to him, in order to be his bride, the proper evidence of the compliance of her heart with the king's suit, is her actually forsaking her own people, and father's house, and coming to him. By this, her compliance with the king's suit is made perfect, in the same sense that the apostle James says, *by works is faith made perfect**. Christ promises eternal life, on condition of our coming to him: but it is such a coming as he directed the young man to, who came to inquire, *what he shall do, that he might have eternal life;* Christ bid him *go and sell all that he had, and come to him, and follow him.* If he had consented in his heart to the proposal, (and had therein come to Christ in his heart,) the proper *evidence* of it would have been his *doing* of it: and therein his coming to Christ would have been *made perfect.* When Christ called Levi the publican, when sitting at the receipt of custom, and in the midst of his worldly gains; the closing of Levi's heart with this invitation of his Saviour to come to him, was manifested, and made perfect, by his actually rising up, leaving all, and following him, Luke v. 27, 28. Christ and other things are set before us together, for us practically to cleave to one, and forsake the other: in such a case, a practical cleaving to Christ, is a practical *acceptance* of Christ; as much as a beggar's reaching out his hand, and taking a gift offered, is his practical acceptance of the gift. Yea, that act of the soul which cleaves to Christ in practice, is itself the most perfect coming of the soul to Christ.

Practice is the most proper evidence of *trusting in Christ for salvation.* The proper signification of the word *trust*, according to the more ordinary use of it, both in common speech and in the holy scriptures, is the emboldening and encouragement of a person's mind, to run some venture in practice, or in something that

* "Our real taking of Christ, appears in our actions and works; Is. i. 19. "If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land.' That is, If ye will consent to take JEHOVAH for your Lord and King; 'if ye give consent;' there is the first thing; but that is not enough; 'but if ye also obey.' The consent that standeth in the inward act of the mind, the truth of it will be seen in your obedience, in the acts of your lives. 'If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land;' that is, you shall take of all that he hath that is convenient for you; for then you are married to him in truth, and have an interest in all his goods."—Dr. Preston's *Church's Carriage*.

he does, on the credit of another's sufficiency and faithfulness. And therefore the proper evidence of his trusting, is *the venture he runs in what he does*. He is not properly said to run any venture in a dependence on any thing, who *does* nothing on that dependence, or whose practice is no otherwise than if he had no dependence. For a man to run a venture in *dependence* on another, is for him to *do something* from that dependence, by which he seems to expose himself, and which he would not do were it not for that dependence. And therefore it is in complying with the difficulties and seeming dangers of Christian practice, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and faithfulness to bestow eternal life, that persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in him for happiness and life. They depend on such promises as that, Matth. x. 39. *He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it*. And so they part with all, and venture their all, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and truth. And this is the scripture notion of *trusting* in Christ, in the exercise of a saving faith in him. Thus Abraham, the father of believers, trusted in Christ, and by faith forsook his own country, in a reliance on the covenant of grace which God established with him, Heb. xi. 8, 9. Thus also *Moses, by faith refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*, Heb. xi. 23, &c. So *by faith* others exposed themselves to be *stoned*, and *sawn in sunder*, or *slain with the sword:* endured the *trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, and wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented*. And in this sense the apostle Paul trusted in Christ, and committed himself to him, venturing himself, and his whole interest, in a dependence on the ability and faithfulness of his Redeemer, under great persecutions, and in suffering the loss of all things: 2 Tim. i. 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

If a man should have word brought him from the king of a distant land, that he intended to make him his heir, if upon receiving the tidings he immediately leaves his native land and friends, and all he has in the world, to go to that country, in a dependence on what he hears, then he may be said to venture himself and all he has in the world upon it. But if he only sits still, and hopes for the promised benefit, inwardly pleasing himself with the thought of it, he cannot properly be said to *venture* himself upon it; he runs no venture in the case; he does nothing, otherwise than he would do, if he had received no such tidings, by which he would be exposed to any suffering, in case all should fail. So he that

on the credit of what he hears of a future world, and in dependence on the report of the gospel, concerning life and immortality, forsakes all, or does so at least so far as there is occasion, making every thing entirely give place to his eternal interest: he, and he only, may properly be said to venture himself on the report of the gospel. And this is the proper evidence of a true *trust* in Christ for salvation.

Practice is the proper evidence of a *gracious love*, both to God and men. The texts that plainly teach this, have been so often mentioned already, that it is needless to repeat them.

Practice is the proper evidence of *humility*. That expression and manifestation of humility of heart which God insists on we should regard as the proper expression and manifestation of it: but this is *walking humbly:* Micah vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

This is also the proper evidence of the true *fear of God*. Prov. viii. 13. *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.* Psal. xxxiv. 11, *&c. Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.—Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile: depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it.* Prov. iii. 7. *Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.* Prov. xvi. 6. *By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil.* Job i. 8. *Hast thou considered my servant Job,—a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* Chap. ii. 3. *Hast thou considered my servant Job,——a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him.* Psal. xxxvi. 1. *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

So practice, in rendering again according to benefits received, is the proper evidence of true *thankfulness*. Psal. cxvi. 12. *What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?* 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. *But Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him.* Paying our vows unto God, and ordering our conversation aright, seem to be spoken of, as the proper expression and evidence of true thankfulness in the 50th Psalm, ver. 14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows to the Most High.* ver. 23. *Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*

The proper evidence of *gracious desires and longings*, and what distinguishes them from those that are false and vain, is, that they are not idle wishes, like Balaam's; but effectual in practice, stirring up persons earnestly and thoroughly to seek the things they long for. Psal. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the*

Lord, that will I seek after. Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory.* ver. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.* Cant. i. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee.*

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious *hope.* 1 John iii. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* Patient continuance in well-doing, through the difficulties and trials of the Christian course, is often mentioned as the proper expression and fruit of a Christian hope; 1 Thess. i. 3. *Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope,* 1 Pet. i. 13, 14. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children,* &c. Psal. cxix. 166. *Lord, I have hoped in thy salvation, and done thy commandments.* Psal. lxxviii. 7. *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of the Lord: but keep his commandments.*

A cheerful practice of our duty, or doing the will of God, is the proper evidence of a truly *holy joy.* Is. lxiv. 5. *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness.* Psal. cxix. 111, 112. *Thy testimonies have I taken for my heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.* Ver. 14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.* 1 Cor. xiii. 6. *Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* 2 Cor. viii. 2. *The abundance of their joy, abounded in the riches of their liberality.*

Practice also is the proper evidence of Christian *fortitude.* The trial of a good soldier is not in his chimney corner, but in the field of battle; 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26. 2 Tim. ii. 3—5.

And as the fruit of holy practice is the chief evidence of the truth of grace; so the degree in which experiences have influence on a person's practice, is the surest evidence of the degree of that which is spiritual and divine in his experiences. Whatever pretences persons may make to great discoveries, great love and joys, they are no further to be regarded, than they have influence on their practice. Not but that allowances must be made for the natural temper. But that does not hinder, but that the degree of grace is justly measured, by the degree of the effect in practice. For the effect of grace is as great, and the alteration as remarkable, in a person of a very ill natural temper, as another. Although a person of such a temper, will not behave himself so well, with the same degree of grace, as another; the diversity from what was before conversion, may be as great: be-

cause a person of a good natural temper did not behave himself so ill, before conversion.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent the evidence there is, that Christian practice is *the chief* of all the signs of saving grace. And before I conclude this discourse, I would say something briefly, in answer to two objections, that may possibly be made by some, against what has been said upon this head.

Object. 1. Some may be ready to say, this seems to be contrary to an opinion much received among good people; that professors should judge of their state chiefly by their inward experience, and that *spiritual experiences* are the main evidences of true grace.

I answer, it is doubtless a true opinion, and justly much received among good people, that professors should chiefly judge of their state by their *experience.* But it is a great mistake, that what has been said is at all *contrary* to that opinion. The chief sign of grace to the consciences of Christians being Christian practice, in the sense explained, and according to what has been shewn to be the true notion of Christian practice, is not at all inconsistent with *Christian experience* being the chief evidence of grace. Christian or holy practice is *spiritual* practice; and that is not the motion of a body, that knows not how, nor when, nor wherefore it moves; but spiritual practice in man, is the practice of a spirit and body jointly; or the practice of a spirit, animating, commanding and actuating a body to which it is united, and over which it has power given it by the Creator. And therefore the main thing in this holy practice is the *holy acts* of the mind, directing and governing the motions of the body. And the motions of the body are to be looked upon as belonging to Christian practice, only secondarily, and as they are dependent and consequent on the acts of the soul. The exercises of grace which Christians are conscious of, are what they *experience* within themselves; and herein therefore lies Christian experience: and this Christian experience consists as much in those operative exercises of grace in the will, immediately concerned in the management of the behaviour of the body, as in other exercises. These inward exercises are not the less a part of Christian experience, because they have outward behaviour immediately connected with them. A strong act of love to God is not the less a part of spiritual experience, because it is the act that immediately produces and effects some self-denying and expensive outward action, which is much to the honour and glory of God.

To speak of Christian experience and practice, as if they were two things, properly and entirely distinct, is to make a distinction without consideration or reason. Indeed all Christian experience is not properly called practice; but all Christian practice is pro-

perly experience. And the distinction that is made between them, is not only an unreasonable, but an unscriptural distinction. Holy practice is one kind or part of Christian experience; and both reason and scripture represent it as the chief, and most important, and most distinguishing part of it. So it is represented in Jer. xxii. 15, 16. *Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and judgment?—He judged the cause of the poor and needy:—was not this to know me? saith the Lord.* Our inward acqaintance with God, surely belongs to the head of experimental religion; but this God represents as consisting chiefly in that experience which there is in holy practice. So the exercises of those graces of the love of God, and the fear of God, are a part of experimental religion; but these the scripture represents as consisting chiefly in practice, in those fore-mentioned texts.—1 John v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.* 2 John 6. *This is love, that we walk after his commandment.* Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. *Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord:—Depart from evil, and do good.* Such experiences as these Hezekiah took comfort in chiefly, on his sick-bed; when he said, *Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.* And such experiences as these the Psalmist chiefly insists upon, in the 119th Psalm, and elsewhere. Such experiences as these the apostle Paul mainly insists upon, as Rom. i. 9. *God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.*—2 Cor. i. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* Chap. iv. 13. *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak.* Chap. v. 7. *We walk by faith, not by sight.* ver. 14. *The love of Christ constraineth us.* Chap. vi. 4—7. *In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,—in labours, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,—by the power of God.* Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* Phil. iii. 7, 8. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.* Col. i. 29. *Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* 1 Thess. ii. 2. *We were bold in our God, to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.* ver. 8—10. *Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto*

you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel, labouring night and day.—Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you. And with such experiences as these this blessed apostle chiefly comforted himself, when he was going to martyrdom, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have keep the faith.*

And not only does the most important and distinguishing part of Christian experience, lie in spiritual practice; but such is the nature of that sort of exercises of grace, wherein spiritual practice consists, that nothing is so properly called by the name of *experimental religion.* For that experience, which exercises of grace prove effectual at the very point of trial—wherein God proves which we will actually cleave to, Christ or our lusts—is the proper *experiment* of the truth and power of our godliness; wherein its victorious power and efficacy in producing its proper effect, and reaching its end, is found *by experience.* This is properly Christian experience, wherein the saints have opportunity to see, by actual *experience* and *trial*, whether they have a heart to do the will of God, and to forsake other things for Christ, or no. As that is called experimental philosophy, which brings opinions and notions to the test of fact; so is that properly called experimental religion, which brings religious affections and intentions to the like test.

There is a sort of external religious practice, without inward experience; which in the sight of God is esteemed good for nothing. And there is what is called experience, without practice, being neither accompanied, nor followed with a Christian behaviour; and this is worse than nothing. Many persons seem to have very wrong notions of Christian experience, and spiritual discoveries. Whenever a person finds a heart to treat God as God, at the time he has the trial, and finds his disposition effectual in the experiment, that is the most proper, and most distinguishing experience. And to have at such a time that sense of divine things, that apprehension of the truth, importance and excellency of the things of religion, which then sways and prevails, and governs his heart and hands; this is the most excellent spiritual light, and these are the most distinguishing discoveries. Religion consists much in holy affection; but those exercises of affection which are most distinguishing of true religion, are these practical exercises. Friendship between earthly friends consists much in affection; but yet those strong exercises of affection, that actually carry them through fire and water for each other, are the highest evidences of true friendship.

There is nothing in what has been said, contrary to what is asserted by some sound divines; when they say, that there are no sure evidences of grace, but the acts of grace. For that doth not hinder but that these operative, productive acts, those exercises of grace, which are effectual in practice, may be the highest evidences. Nor does it hinder but that, when there are many of these acts and exercises, following one another in a course, under various trials of every kind, the evidence is still heightened; as one act confirms another. A man by once seeing his neighbour, may have good evidence of his presence; but by seeing him from day to day, and conversing with him in a course, in various circumstances, the evidence is established. The disciples, when they first saw Christ after his resurrection, had good evidence that he was alive: but by conversing with him for forty days, and his *shewing himself to them alive, by many infallible proofs*, they had yet higher evidence*.

The *witness* or seal of the Spirit consists in the *effect* of the Spirit of God in the heart, in the implantation and *exercises* of grace there, and so consists in *experience*. And it is beyond doubt, that this seal of the Spirit is the highest kind of evidence of the saints' adoption, that ever they obtain. But in these exercises of grace in practice, God gives witness, and sets to his seal, in the most conspicuous, eminent, and evident manner. It has been abundantly found to be true in fact, by the experience of the Christian church, that Christ commonly gives by his Spirit the greatest and most joyful evidences to his saints of their sonship, in those effectual *exercises* of grace under *trials*, of which we have spoken; as is manifest in the full assurance, and unspeakable joys of many of the martyrs. Agreeable to 1 Pet. iv. 14. *If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.* And Rom. v. 2, 3. *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and glory in tribulations.* And agreeable to what the apostle Paul often declares of what he experienced in his trials. When the apostle Peter, in my text, speaks of the *joy unspeakable and full of glory*,

* "The more these visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be. A man that has been assured of such visible exercises of grace, may quickly after be in doubt, whether he was not mistaken. But when such actings are renewed again and again, he grows more settled and established about his good estate. If a man see a thing once, that makes him sure, but if afterwards he fear he was deceived, when he comes to see it again, he is more sure he was not mistaken. If a man read such passages in a book, he is sure it is so. Some months after, some may bear him down, that he was mistaken, so as to make him question it himself; but when he looks, and reads it again, he is abundantly confirmed. The more men's grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2. 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.'"—Steddard's *Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy*

which the Christians to whom he wrote, experienced; he has respect to what they found under persecution, as appears by the context. Christ thus manifesting himself, as the friend and saviour of his saiuts cleaving to him under trials, seems to have been represented of old by his coming and manifesting himself to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the furnace. And when the apostle speaks of the *witness* of the Spirit, in Rom. viii. 15—17, he has more immediate respect to what the Christians experienced in their exercises of love to God, while suffering persecution; as is plain by the context. He is, in the foregoing verses, encouraging the Christian Romans under their sufferings, that though their bodies be dead because of sin, yet they should be raised to life again. But it is more especially plain by the verse immediately following, ver. 18. *For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* So the apostle has evidently respect to their persecutions, in all that he says to the end of the chapter. So when the apostle speaks of the *earnest of the Spirit*, which God had given to him, 2 Cor. v. 5, the context shews plainly that he has respect to what was given him in his great trials and sufferings. And in that promise of *the white stone, and new name, to him that overcomes*, Rev. ii. 17, it is evident Christ has a special respect to a benefit that Christians should obtain by *overcoming*, when tried, in that day of persecution. This appears by ver. 13, and many other passages in this epistle to the seven churches of Asia.

Object. 2. Some also may be ready to object against what has been said of Christian practice being the chief evidence of the truth of grace, that this is a *legal* doctrine; and that this making practice a thing of such great importance in religion, magnifies *works*, and tends to lead men to make too much of their *own doings*, to the diminution of the glory of free grace, and does not seem well to consist with that great gospel-doctrine of *justification by faith alone.*

But this objection is altogether without reason. Which way it is inconsistent with the *freeness* of God's grace, that holy practice should be a *sign* of God's grace? It is our works being the *price* of God's favour, and not their being the *sign* of it, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the freeness of that favour. Surely the beggar's looking on the money he has in his hands, as a *sign* of the kindness of him who gave it to him, is in no respect inconsistent with the *freeness* of that kindness. It is his having money in his hand as the *price* of a benefit, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the free kindness of the giver. The notion of the *freeness* of the grace of God to sinners, as that is that is revealed and taught in the gospel, is not, that no holy

and amiable qualifications or actions in us shall be a *fruit*, and so a *sign* of that grace; but that it is not the *worthiness* or loveliness of any qualification or action of ours which recommends us to that grace. Free grace implies, that kindness is shewn to the unworthy and unlovely; that there is great excellency in the benefit bestowed, and no excellency in the subject as the price of it; that goodness goes forth, and flows out, from the fulness of God's nature, the fulness of the fountain of good, without any amiableness in the object to draw it. And this is the notion of justification *without works*, (as this doctrine is taught in the scripture;) that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of our works, or any thing in us, which is in any wise accepted with God, as a *balance* for the guilt of sin, or a recommendation of sinners to his acceptance as heirs of life. Thus we are justified only by the righteousness of *Christ*, and not by *our* righteousness. And when works are opposed to faith in this affair, and it is said that we are justified by faith and not by works; thereby is meant, that it is not the worthiness or amiableness of our works, or any thing in us, which recommends us to an interest in Christ and his benefits; but that we have this interest only by faith, or by our souls *receiving* Christ, or adhering to, and closing with him. But that the worthiness or amiableness of nothing in us recommends and brings us to an interest in Christ, is no argument that nothing in us is a *sign* of an interest in Christ.

If the doctrines of free grace, and justification by faith alone, be inconsistent with the importance of *holy practice* as a *sign* of grace; then they are equally inconsistent with the importance of *any thing* whatsoever in us as a sign of grace; any holiness, or any grace in us, or any *experiences*: for it is as contrary to the doctrines of free grace and justification by faith alone, that any of *these* should be the righteousness which we are justified by, as that *holy practice* should be so. It is with holy works, as it is with holy qualifications: it is inconsistent with the freeness of gospel-grace, that a title to salvation should be given to men for the loveliness of any of their holy qualifications, as much as that it should be given for the holiness of their works. It is inconsistent with the gospel-doctrine of free grace, that an interest in Christ and his benefits should be given for the loveliness of a man's *true holiness*; the amiableness of his renewed, sanctified, heavenly heart; his love to God, his experience of joy in the Holy Ghost, self-emptiness, a spirit to exalt Christ above all, and to give all glory to him, and a heart devoted unto him. I say, it is inconsistent with the gospel-doctrine of free grace, that a title to Christ's benefits should be given out of regard to the loveliness of *any* of these, or that any of these should be our *righteousness* in the affair of justification. And yet this does not hinder the importance of

these things as *evidences* of an interest in Christ. Just so it is with respect to holy actions and works. To make light of works because we are not *justified* by them, is the same thing in effect as to make light of all religion, all grace and holiness, yea, true evangelical holiness, and all gracious experience: for *all* is included, when the scripture says, we are not justified by *works*.— By works in this case is meant all our own righteousness, religion, or holiness, and every thing that *is in us;* all the good we do, and are conscious of; all external acts, all internal exercises of grace, all experiences, and all those holy and heavenly things wherein the life, power, and very essence of religion consist; all those great things which Christ and his apostles mainly insisted on in their preaching, and endeavoured to promote, as of the greatest consequence in the hearts and lives of men, and all good dispositions, exercises and qualifications of every kind whatsoever; and even *faith itself*, considered as a part of our holiness. For we are justified by none of these things: if we were, we should, in a scripture-sense, be justified by *works*. And therefore if it be not legal, and contrary to the evangelical doctrine of justification without works, to insist on any of these, as of great importance in evidence of an interest in Christ; then no more is it thus, to insist on the importance of holy practice. It would be *legal* to suppose that holy practice *justifies* by entitling us to Christ's benefits; but it is not legal to suppose, that holy practice justifies the sincerity of a believer, as the proper *evidence* of it. The apostle James did not think it legal to say, that *Abraham our father was justified by works*, in this sense. The Spirit that indited the scripture, did not think the great importance and absolute necessity of holy practice, in this respect, to be inconsistent with the freeness of grace; for it commonly teaches them both together; as in Rev. xxi. 6, 7. God says, *I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely;* and then adds, in the very next words, *He that overcometh shall inherit all things;* as though behaving well in the Christian race and warfare, were the condition of the promise. So in the next chapter, the 14th and 15th verses, Christ says, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city:* and then declares 15th ver. *how they that are of a wicked practice* shall be excluded.— Yet in the two following verses, with very great solemnity, Christ invites all to come, and take of the water of life freely; *I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star.— And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.* So chap. iii. 20, 21. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If*

any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he with me. But then it is added in the next words, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne.* And in that great invitation, Matth. xi. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;* Christ adds in the next words, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light;* as though taking the burden of Christ's service, and imitating his example, were necessary in order to the promised rest. So in that great invitation to sinners to accept of free grace; Is. lv. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price:* even there, in the continuation of the same invitation, the sinner's forsaking his wicked practice is spoken of as necessary to the obtaining of mercy; ver. 7. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* So the riches of divine grace in the justification of sinners, is set forth, with the necessity of holy practice, Is. i. 16, &c. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* And in that most solemn invitation of wisdom, Prov. ix. after it is represented what great provision is made; and how all things were ready, the house built, the beasts killed, the wine mingled, the table furnished, and the messengers sent forth to invite the guests; then we have the free invitation, ver. 4—6. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, (i. e.* has no righteousness) *she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.* But then in the next breath it follows, *Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding:* as though forsaking sin, and going in the way of holiness, were necessary in order to life. So that the *freeness* of grace, and the *necessity* of holy practice, which are thus joined together in scripture, are not inconsistent. Nor does it at all diminish the honour and importance of faith, that its exercises and effects in practice should be esteemed its chief signs, any more than it lessens the importance of life, that action and motion are esteemed its chief signs.

So that in what has been said of the importance of holy practice as the main sign of sincerity, there is nothing legal; nothing derogatory to the freedom and sovereignty of gospel-grace; no-

thing in the least clashing with the gospel-doctrine of justification by faith alone without the works of the law; nothing in the least tending to lessen the glory of the Mediator and our dependence on his righteousness; nothing infringing on the special prerogatives of faith in the affair of our salvation; nothing in any wise detracting from the glory of God and his mercy, exalting man, or diminishing his dependence and obligation. So that if any are against the importance of holy practice as explained, it must be only from a senseless aversion to the letters and sound of the word *works;* when there is no reason in the world to be given for it, but what may be given with equal force, why they should have an aversion to the words *holiness, godliness, grace, religion, experience,* and even *faith* itself: for to make a righteousness of any of these, is as legal, and as inconsistent with the way of the new covenant, as to make a righteousness of holy practice*.

It is greatly to the hurt of religion, for persons to insist little on those things which the scripture insists most upon, as of most importance in the evidence of our interest in Christ, under a notion that to lay weight on these things is legal, and an old covenant-way. To neglect the exercises and effectual operations of grace in *practice,* and insist almost wholly on discoveries, and the method of the imminent exercises of conscience and grace in contemplation—depending on an ability to make nice distinctions in these matters, and a faculty of accurate discerning in them, from philosophy or experience—is highly injurious. It is in vain to seek for any better, or any further signs, than those which the scriptures have most expressly mentioned, and most frequently insisted on, as signs of godliness. They who pretend to a greater accuracy in giving signs—or, by their extraordinary experience, or insight into the nature of things, to give more distinguishing marks, which shall more thoroughly search out, and detect the hypocrite—are but subtle to darken their own minds, and the

* "You say you know Christ, and the love and good-will of Christ towards you, and that he is the propitiation for your sins. How do you know this? 'He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar,' 1 John ii. 4. True, might some reply, he that keeps not the commands of Christ, hath thereby a sure evidence that he knows him not, and that he is not united to him; but is this any evidence that we do know him, and that we are united to him, if we do keep his commandments? Yes verily, saith the apostle, 'Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.' And again, ver. 5. 'Hereby know we that we are in him.' What can be more plain? What a vanity is it to say, that this is running upon a covenant of works?—O beloved, it is a sad thing to hear such questions, and such cold answers also, that sanctification possibly may be an evidence. May be? Is it not certain? Assuredly to deny it, is as bad as to affirm that God's own promises of favour are not sure evidences thereof, and consequently that they are lies and untruths.—Our Saviour, who was no legal preacher, pronounceth, and consequently evidenceth blessedness, by eight or nine promises, expressly made to such persons, as had inherent graces, Matth. v. 3, 4, &c."—Shepard's *Sound Believer,* p. 221, 222, 223.

minds of others; their refinings, and nice discerning, are in God's sight, but refined foolishness, and sagacious delusion. Here are applicable those words of Agur, Prov. xxx. 5, 6. *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield to them that put their trust in him; add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* Our wisdom and discerning, with regard to the hearts of men, is not much to be trusted. We can see but a little way into the nature of the soul, and the depths of man's heart. The ways are many whereby persons' affections may be moved without any supernatural influence: the natural springs of the affections are various and secret. Many things have oftentimes a joint influence on the affections; the imagination, natural temper, education, the common influences of the Spirit of God; a surprising concourse of affecting circumstances, an extraordinary coincidence of things in the course of men's thoughts together with the subtle management of invisible malicious spirits. No philosophy or experience will ever be sufficient to guide us safely through this labyrinth and maze, without our closely following the clue which God has given us in his word. God knows his own reasons why he insists on some things, and plainly sets them forth as what we should try ourselves by, rather than others. It may be it is because he knows that these things are attended with less perplexity, and that we are less liable to be deceived by them than others.—He best knows our nature, and the nature and manner of his own operations; and he best knows the way of our safety. He knows what allowances to make for different states of his church, different tempers of particular persons, and varieties in the manner of his own operations; how far nature may resemble grace, and how far nature may be mixed with grace; what affections may rise from imagination, and how far imagination may be mixed with spiritual illumination. And therefore it is our wisdom not to take his work out of his hands; but to follow him, and lay the stress of the judgment of ourselves there, where he has directed us. If we do otherwise, no wonder if we are bewildered, confounded, and fatally deluded. But if we had got into the way of looking chiefly at those things which Christ, his apostles, and prophets chiefly insisted on—while judging of ourselves and others, chiefly regarding *practical* exercises and effects of grace, not neglecting other things—it would have been of manifold happy consequence. This would above all things tend to the conviction of deluded hypocrites, and to prevent the delusion of those whose hearts were never brought to a thorough compliance with the strait and narrow way which leads to life. It would tend to deliver us from innumerable perplexities, arising from various inconsistent schemes about methods and steps of experience; it would greatly tend to prevent professors neglecting strictness of life, and tend to pro-

mote their engagedness and earnestness in their Christian walk; and it would become fashionable for men to shew their Christianity, more by an amiable distinguished behaviour, than by an abundant and excessive declaring of their experiences. We should then get into the way of appearing lively in religion, more by being lively in the *service* of God and our generation, than by the forwardness of our *tongues*, and making a business of proclaiming on the house-tops the holy and eminent acts and exercises of our own hearts. Then Christians who are intimate friends, would talk together of their experiences and comforts, in a manner better becoming Christian humility and modesty, and more to each other's profit; their tongues not running before their hands and feet, after the prudent example of the blessed apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 6. Many occasions of spiritual pride would be cut off, and so a great door shut against the devil; and a great many of the main stumbling-blocks against experimental and powerful religion would be removed. Religion would be declared and manifested in such a way as—instead of hardening spectators, and exceedingly promoting infidelity and atheism—would above all things tend to convince men that there is a reality in religion, and greatly awaken them, and win them, by convincing their consciences of the importance and excellency of religion. Thus the light of professors would so shine before men, that others seeing their good works, would glorify their Father which is in Heaven!

APPENDIX

TO THE TREATISE OF THE AFFECTIONS, IN TWO LETTERS.†

LETTER I.

To Mr. GILLESPIE, *in answer to Objections.*

NORTHAMPTON, SEPT. 4, 1747.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

I RECEIVED your letter of Nov. 24, 1746, though very long after it was written. I thank you for it, and for your offering me a correspondence with you. Such an offer I shall gladly embrace, and esteem it a great privilege, more especially from the character I have received of you from Mr. Abercrombie, who I perceive was intimately acquainted with you.

As to the objections you make against some things contained in my late book *on Religious Affections*, I am sorry you did not read the book through, before you made them; if you had, perhaps the difficulties would not have appeared quite so great. As to what is contained in the 74th and 75th pages, I suppose there is not the least difference of opinion between you and me, unless it be concerning the signification and propriety of expressions. I am fully of your mind, and always was without the least doubt of it; "that every one, both saint and sinner, is indispensibly bound, at all seasons, by the divine authority, to believe instantly on the Lord Jesus, and that the command of the Lord, 1 John iii. 23, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, as it is a prescription of the moral law, no less binds the sinner to immediate performance, than the commandment not to kill, to keep the Sabbath-day, or any other duty, as to the *present* performance of which, in way of duty, all agree the sinner is bound; and that men are bound to trust the divine faithfulness

† These Letters were first printed in the Quarterly Magazine, Edinburgh.

be their case with respect to light and darkness, sight, &c. what it will; and that no situation they can be in, looses them from obligation to glorify the Lord at all seasons, and expecting the fulfilment of his words; and that the sinner that is without spiritual light or sight is bound to believe, and that it is a duty *at that very time* incumbent on him to believe." But I conceive that there is a great deal of difference between these two things, viz. its being a man's duty that is without spiritual light or sight to believe, and its being his duty to believe without spiritual light or sight, or to believe while he yet remains without spiritual light or sight. Just the same difference that is between these two things, viz. its being *his* duty that has no faith to believe, and its being his duty to believe without faith, or to believe without believing. I trust there is none will assert the latter, because of the contradiction that it implies. As it is not proper to say, it is a man's duty to believe without faith, because it implies a contradiction, so I think it equally improper to say it is a man's duty to believe without these things that are essentially implied in faith, because that also implies a contradiction. But a spiritual sight of Christ or knowledge of Christ is essentially implied in the very nature and notion of faith, and therefore it is absurd to talk of believing on Christ without spiritual light or sight. It is the duty of a man that is without these things, that essentially belong to faith, to believe, and it is the duty of a man that is without these things that essentially belong to love, to love God; because it is an indispensible obligation that lies on all men at all times, and in all circumstances, to love God: but yet it is not a duty to love God without loving him, or continuing without those things that essentially belong to his love. It is the duty of those that have no sense of the loveliness of God, and have no esteem of him, to love him, and they be not in the least excused by the want of this sense and esteem, in not loving him one moment; but yet it would be properly nonsense to say it is their duty to love him without any sense of his loveliness or any esteem of him. It is indeed their duty this moment to come out of their disesteem and stupid wicked insensibility of his loveliness, and to love him. I made the distinction, (I thought) very plainly, in the midst of those sentences you quote as exceptionable. I say expressly, p. 74, "It is truly the duty of those who are in darkness to come out of darkness into light and believe; but, that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or sight, is an anti-scriptural and absurd doctrine." The misunderstanding between us, dear Sir, I suppose to be in the different application of the particle *without*, in my use of it, and your understanding of it, or what we understand as spoken of and supposed in the expression, *without spiritual light or sight.* As I use it, I apply it to

the act of believing, and I suppose it to be very absurd to talk of an act of faith *without* spiritual light and sight, wherein I suppose you will allow me to be in the right. As you understand it, it is applied to duty or obligation, and you suppose it to be not at all absurd to talk of an obligation to believe without spiritual light or sight, but that the obligation remains full where there is no spiritual light or sight, wherein I allow you are in the right. I think, Sir, if you read what I have said in my book on this head again, it will be exceeding apparent to you, that it is thus that I apply the preposition *without*, and not as you before understood it. I thought I had very plainly manifested that what I meant by *being in darkness* was a being in spiritual blindness, and so in a dead, stupid, carnal, and unchristian frame and way, and not what is commonly called a being without the light of God's countenance, under the hidings of his face. We have a great number of people in these parts that go on that supposition in their notions and practice, that there really is such a thing as such a manner of believing, such a kind of faith as this, viz. a confident believing and firm trusting in God in the dark, in the sense mentioned, that is to be sought after, and is the subject matter of divine prescription, and which many actually have; and indeed there are innumerable instances of such as are apparently in a most senseless, careless, negligent, apostate, and every way unchristian and wicked frame, that yet, encouraged by this principle, do retain an exceeding strong confidence of their good state, and count that herein they do their duty and give much glory to God, under the notion of trusting God in the dark, and hoping against hope, and not trusting on their own righteousness; and they suppose it would shew a legal spirit to do otherwise. I thought it would be manifest to every reader that I was arguing against such a sort of people.

You say, "It merits consideration whether the believer should ever doubt of his state, on any account whatever, because doubting, as opposed to believing, is absolutely sinful." Here, Sir, you seem to suppose that a person's doubting of his own good estate is the proper opposite of faith, and these and some other expressions in your letter seem to suppose that doubting of one's good estate and unbelief is the same thing, and so, that being confident of one's good estate and faith are the same thing. This I acknowledge I don't understand; I don't take faith, and a person's believing that they have faith, to be the same thing. Nor do I take unbelief, or being without faith, and doubting whether they have it, to be the same thing, but entirely different. I should have been glad either that you had taken a little more notice of what I say on this head, p. 76, 77, or that you had said something to convince me that I am wrong in this point. *The exercise of faith is doubtless the way to be delivered from darkness, deadness,*

backsliding, &c. or rather is the deliverance; as forsaking sin is the way to deliverance from sin, and is the deliverance itself. The exercise of grace is doubtless the way to deliverance from a graceless frame, that consists in the want of the exercise of grace. But as to what you say, or seem to intimate, of a person's being confident of his own good estate, as being the way to be delivered from darkness, deadness, backsliding and prevailing iniquity, I think, whoever supposes this to be God's method of delivering his saints, when sunk into an evil, careless, carnal and unchristian frame, first to assure them of their good estate and his favour, while they yet remain in such a frame, and to make *that* the means of their deliverance, does surely mistake God's method of dealing with such persons. Among all the multitudes I have had opportunity to observe, I never knew one dealt with after this manner. I have known many brought back from great declension, that appeared to me to be true saints, but it was in a way very diverse from this. *In the first place*, conscience has been awakened, and they have been brought into great fear of the wrath of God, having his favour hid, and they have been the subjects of a kind of new work of humiliation, brought to a great sense of their deserving of God's wrath, even while they have yet feared it, before God has delivered them from the apprehension of it, and comforted them with a renewed sense of his favour.

As to what I say of the necessity of universal obedience, or of one way of known sin, (i. e. so as properly to be said to be the way and manner of the man,) being exception enough against a man's salvation; I should have known better what to have said further about it, if you had briefly shewn how the scriptures that I mention, and the arguments I deduce from them, are insufficient for the proof of this point. I confess they appear to me to prove it as fully as any thing concerning the necessary qualifications of a true saint can be proved from Scripture.

You object against my saying, p. 276. "Nor can a true saint ever fall away, so that it shall come to this, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference in his walk and behaviour since his conversion, from what was before." This, I think, implies no more than that his walk over the same ground, in like circumstances, and under like trials, will have a remarkable difference. As to the instance you mention of David and Solomon, I don't know that the Scriptures give us any where so much of a history of their walk and behaviour before their conversion, as to put us into any proper capacity of comparing their after walk with their former. These examples are uncertain. But I think those doctrines of the Scripture are not uncertain, which I mention in the place you cite, to confirm the point, which teach that converts are new men, new creatures, that they are renewed not only within

but without, that old things are passed away, and all things become new, that they walk in newness of life, that the members of their bodies are new, that whereas they before were the servants of sin, and yielded their members servants of iniquity, now they yield them servants of righteousness unto holiness.

As to those doubts and cases of difficulty you mention, I should think it very needless for a divine of your character, to apply yourself to me for a solution of difficulties, for whom it would be more proper to learn of you. However, since you are pleased to insist on my giving my mind upon them, I would observe, as to the first case you mention, of a person incessantly harassed by Satan, &c. you don't say of what nature the temptations are that he is harassed with. But I think it impossible to give proper advice and direction without knowing this. Satan is to be resisted in a very different manner, in different kinds of onsets. When persons are harassed with those strange, horrid injections, that melancholic persons are often subject to, he is to be resisted in a very different manner, from what is proper in case of violent temptation to gratify some worldly lust. In the former case, I should by no means advise a person to resist the devil by entering the lists with him, and vehemently engaging their mind in an earnest dispute and violent struggle with the grand adversary, but rather by diverting the mind from his frightful suggestions, by going on stedfastly and diligently in the ordinary course of duty, without allowing themselves time and leisure to attend to the devil's sophistry, or viewing his frightful representations, committing themselves to God by prayer in this way, without anxiety about what had been suggested. That is the best way of resisting the devil, that crosses his design most; and he more effectually disappoints him in such cases, that treats him with neglect, than he that attends so much to him, as to engage in a direct conflict, and goes about to try his strength and skill with him, in a violent dispute or combat. The latter course rather gives him advantage, than any thing else. It is what he would; if he can get persons thus engaged in a violent struggle, he gains a great point. He knows that melancholic persons are not fit for it. By this he gains that point of diverting and taking off the person from the ordinary course of duty, which is one great thing he aims at; and by this, having gained the person's attention to what he says, he has opportunity to use all his craft and subtlety, and by this struggle he raises melancholic vapours to a greater degree, and further weakens the person's mind, and gets him faster and faster in his snares, deeper and deeper in the mire. He increases the person's anxiety of mind, which is the very thing by which mainly he fulfils all his purposes with such persons.

Concerning the other difficulty you mention relating to the verifying of Rom. viii. 20. *All things shall work together for good, &c.* in a saint that falls under blacksliding and spiritual decays, &c. it seems to be a matter of some difficulty to understand exactly how this is to be taken, and how far it may from hence be inferred, that the temptations the saints meet with from Satan, and an evil world, and their own declensions and sins, shall surely work for their good. However, since you desire my thoughts, I would express them, such as they are, as follows.

In order rightly to state this matter, there are two things may be laid down, as positions of certain and indubitable truth concerning this doctrine of the apostle.

First, The meaning cannot be that God's dispensations and disposals towards each saint are the best for him, most tending to his happiness *of all that are possible:* or that all things that are ordered for him, or done by God with respect to him, are in all respects better for him than any thing else that God could have ordered or done, issuing in the highest good and happiness, that it is possible he should be brought to; for that would be as much as to say, that God will bestow on every one of his elect, as much happiness as he can (confer,) in the utmost exercise of his omnipotence, and this sets aside all these different degrees of grace and holiness here, and glory hereafter, which he bestows according to his sovereign pleasure.

All things may work together for good to the saints. All may be of benefit to them, and may have a concurring tendency to their happiness, and may all finally issue in it, and yet not tend to, or issue in the highest degree of good and happiness possible. There is a certain measure of holiness and happiness, that each one of the elect is eternally appointed to, and all things that relate to him, work together to bring to pass *this appointed measure of good.* The text and context speak of God's *eternal purpose* of good to the elect, pre-destinating them to a conformity to his Son in holiness and happiness; and the implicit reasoning of the apostle leads us to suppose that all things will purely concur to bring to effect God's eternal purpose. And therefore from his reasoning it may be inferred, that all things will tend to, and work together to bring to pass, that degree of good that God has purposed to bestow upon them, and not any more. And indeed it would be in itself unreasonable to suppose any thing else but this; inasmuch as God is the supreme orderer of all things, doubtless all things shall be so ordered, that with one consent, they shall help to bring to pass his ends, aims, and purposes; but surely not to bring to pass what he does not aim at, and never intended. God in his government of the world, is carrying on his own designs in every thing; but he is not carrying on that which is not his

design, and therefore there is no need of supposing, that all the circumstances, means and advantages of every saint, are the best in every respect that God could have ordered for him, or that there could have been no circumstances or means that he could have been the subject of, that would with God's usual blessing have issued in his greater good. Every saint is as it were a living stone, that in this present state of preparation, is fitting for the place appointed for him in the heavenly temple. And in this sense all things undoubtedly work together for good to every one that is called according to God's purpose. He is, all the while he lives in this world, by all the dispensations of Providence towards him, fitting for the particular mansion in glory, that is appointed and prepared for him, or hewing for his appointed place in the heavenly building.

Secondly, Another thing which is no less certain and demonstrable than the position that has been already laid down, and indeed follows from it, is this, when it is said "all things work together for good," &c. hereby cannot be intended that all things, *both positive and negative, are best for them*, or that it is so universally, that not only every positive thing that the saints are the subjects of, or are concerned in, will work for their good, but also that when any thing is absent or withheld from them by God in his providence, that absence or withholding is also for their good in that sense, or to be better for them than the presence or bestowment would have been; for this would have the same absurd consequence that was mentioned before, viz. That God makes every saint as happy as possibly he can. And besides, if so, it would follow that God's withholding greater degrees of the sanctifying influences of his Spirit is for the saints' good, and that it is best for them to live and die so low in grace as they do, which would be as much as to say that it is for their good to have no more good, or that it is for their happiness to have no more happiness here and hereafter. If we take good notice of the apostle's discourse in Rom. viii. it will be apparent that his words imply no such thing. All God's creatures, and all that God does in disposing of them, is for the good of the saint. But it will not thence follow, that all God's forbearing to do is also for his good, or that it is best for him, that God does no more for him.

Therefore, the following things I humbly conceive to be the truth, concerning the sins and temptations of the saints being for their good.

1. That all things, whatsoever, are for the good of the saints, things negative as well as positive, in this sense, that *God intends that some benefit to them shall arise from every thing*, so that something of the grace and love of God, will hereafter be seen to have been exercised towards them in every thing. At the same time,

the sovereignty of God will also be seen, with regard to the measure of the good or benefit aimed at, in that some other things, if God had seen cause to order them, would have produced an higher benefit. And with regard to negative disposals, consisting not in God's doing, but forbearing to do, not in giving, but withholding, some benefit in some respect or other, will ever accrue to the saints, even from these; though sometimes the benefit will not be equal to the benefit withheld, if it had been bestowed. As for instance, when a saint lives and dies comparatively low in grace. There is some good improvement shall be made, even of this, in the eternal state of the saint, whereby he shall receive a real benefit, though the benefit shall not be equal to the benefit of an higher degree of holiness, if God had bestowed it.

2. God carries on a design of love to his people, and to each individual saint, not only in all things that they are the subjects of while they live, but also in all his works and disposals, and in all his acts from eternity to eternity.

3. That the sin, in general, of the saints, is for their good, and for the best in this respect, viz. that it is a thing that, through the sovereign grace of God, and his infinite wisdom, will issue in a high advancement of their eternal happiness, that they have been sinful, fallen creatures, and not from the beginning perfectly innocent and holy, as the elect angels; and that they shall obtain some additional good on occasion of all the sin they have been the subjects of, or have committed, beyond what they would have had, if they never had been fallen creatures.

4. The sin of the saints in this sense cannot be for their good, that it should finally be best for them, that while they lived in this world, their restoration and recovery from the corruption they became subject to by the fall, was no greater, the mortification of sin, and spiritual vivification of their soul carried on to no greater degree, that they remained so deficient, as to love to God, Christian love to men, humility, heavenly-mindedness, and that they were so barren, and did so few good works, and consequently, that in general, they had so much sin, and of the exercises of it, and not more holiness, and of the exercises and fruits of that, for in proportion as one of these is more, the other will be less, as infallibly, as darkness is more or less, in proportion to the diminution or increase of light. It cannot finally be better for the saints, that in general, while they live, they had so much sin of heart and life, rather than more holiness of heart and life. Because the reward of all at last will be according to their works, and he that sowed sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that sowed bountifully, shall reap also bountifully, and he that builds wood, hay and stubble, shall finally suffer loss, and have a less reward, than

if he had built gold, silver and precious stones, though he himself shall be saved. But notwithstanding this,

5. The sins and falls of the saints, may be for their good, and for the better, in this respect, that the issue may be better than if the temptation had not happened, and so the occasion not given, either for the sin of yielding to the temptation, or the virtue of overcoming it: And yet not in the respect (with regard to their sins or falls in general) that it should be better for them in the issue, that they have yielded to the temptation offered, than if they had overcome. For the fewer victories they obtain over temptation, the fewer are their good works, and particularly of that kind of good works to which a distinguished reward is promised in Rev. ii. and iii. and in many other parts of scripture. The word of God represents the work of a Christian in this world as a warfare, and it is evident in the Scripture that he who acquits himself as the best soldier shall win the greatest prize. Therefore, when the saints are brought into backslidings and decays, by being overcome by temptations, the issue of their backslidings may be some good to them. They may receive some benefit by occasion of it, beyond what they would have received if that temptation had never prevailed, and yet their backslidings in general may be a great loss to them in the following respect, viz. That they shall have much less reward, than if the temptations had been overcome, and they notwithstanding had persevered in spiritual vigour and diligence. But yet this don't hinder, but that,

6. It may be so ordered by a sovereign and all-wise God, that the saints' falls and backslidings, through their being overcome by temptations in some particular instances, may prove best for them, not only in that the issue may be greater good to them, than they would have received if the temptation had not happened, but even greater in that instance, than if the temptation had been overcome. It may be so ordered that their being overcome by that temptation, shall be the occasion of their having greater strength, and on the whole, obtaining more and greater victories, than if they had not fallen in that instance. But this is no where promised, nor can it be so, that, in the general, it should prove better for them that they were foiled so much, and did overcome so little, in the course of their lives, and that finally their decay is so great, or their progress so small. From these things it appears,

7. That the saying of the apostle, *all things work together for good to them that love God*, though it be fulfilled in some respects to all saints, and at all times, and in all circumstances, yet it is fulfilled more especially and eminently to the saints *continuing in the exercise of love to God*, not falling from the exercises, or failing in the fruits of divine love in times of trial. Then it is, that

temptations, enemies, and suffering, will be best for them, working that which is most for their good every way, and they shall be more than conquerors over tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword, Rom. viii. 35—37.

8. As God is carrying on a design of love to each individual saint, in all his works and disposals whatsoever, as was observed before, so the particular design of love to them that he is carrying on, is to fit them for, and bring them to their appointed place in the heavenly temple, or to that individual, precise happiness and glory in heaven, that his eternal love designed for them, and no other, (for God's design of love or of happiness to them, is only just what it is, and is not different from itself.) And to fulfil this particular design of love, every thing that God does, or in any respect disposes, whether it be positive, privative or negative, contributes, because doubtless every thing that God does, or in any respect offers, tends to fulfil his aims and designs. Therefore, undoubtedly,

9. All the while the saint lives in the world, he is fitting for his appointed mansion in glory, and hewing for his place in the heavenly building. And all his temptations, though they may occasion, for the present, great spiritual wounds, yet at last, they shall be an occasion of his being more fitted for his place in glory. And, therefore, we may determine, that however the true saint may die in some respects, under decays, under the decay of comfort, and of the exercise of some religious affections, yet every saint dies at that time when his habitual fitness for his place in the heavenly temple is most complete, because otherwise, all things that happen to him while he lives, would not work together to fit him for that place.

10. God brings his saints at the end of their lives to this greatest fitness for their place in heaven, not by diminishing grace in their hearts, but by increasing it, and carrying on the work of grace in their souls. If it be not so, that cannot be true, that where God *has begun a good work he will perform it, or carry it on to the day of Christ*, for if they die with a less degree of grace than they had before, then it ceases to be carried on before the day of Christ comes. If grace is finally diminished, then Satan so far finally obtains the victory. He finally prevails to diminish the fire in the smoking flax, and then how is that promise verified, that God *will not quench the smoking flax, until he bring forth judgment unto victory?* So that it must needs be, that although saints may die under decay in some respects, yet they never die under a real habitual decay of the work of grace in general. If they fall, they shall rise again before they die, and rise higher than before, if not in joy, and some other affections, yet in greater de-

grees of spiritual knowledge, self-emptiness, trust in God, and solidity and ripeness of grace.

If these things that have been observed are true, then we may infer from them these corollaries.

1*st*, That notwithstanding the truth of that saying of the apostle, Rom. viii. 28, the saints have cause to lament their leanness and barrenness, and that they are guilty of so much sin, not only as it is to the dishonour of God, but also as that which is like to be to their own eternal loss and damage.

2*dly*, That nothing can be inferred from the forementioned promise tending to set aside, or make void the influence of motives to earnest endeavours to avoid all sin, to increase in holiness, and abound in good works, from an aim at an high and eminent degree of glory and happiness in the future world.

3*dly*, That though it is to the eternal damage of the saints, ordinarily, when they yield to, and are overcome by temptations, yet Satan and other enemies of the saints by whom these temptations come, are always wholly disappointed in their temptation, and baffled in their design to hurt the saints, inasmuch as the temptation and the sin that comes by it, is for the saints' good, and they receive a greater benefit in the issue, than if the temptation had not been, and yet less than if the temptation had been overcome.

As to Mr. Boston's View of the Covenant of Grace, I have had some opportunity with it, and I confess I did not understand his scheme delivered in that book. I have read his Fourfold State of Man, and liked it exceeding well. I think he herein shews himself to be a truly great divine.

Hoping that you will accept my letter with candour, and remember me in your prayers, I subscribe myself

Your affectionate and obliged Brother
and Servant,
JONATHAN EDWARDS.

LETTER II.

To Mr. GILLESPIE, *in answer to Objections.*

NORTHAMPTON, APRIL 2, 1750.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

I received your favour of September 19, 1748, the last summer, and would now heartily thank you for it. I suppose it might come in the same ship with letters I had from my other correspondents in Scotland, which I answered the last summer; but it did not come to hand till a long time after most of the others, and after I had finished and sent away my answers to them, and that opportunity for answering was past. I have had no leisure or opportunity to write any letters to Scotland from that time till now, by reason of my peculiar and very extraordinary circumstances on account of the controversy that has arisen between me and my people concerning the profession that ought to be made by persons that come to Christian sacraments, which is likely speedily to issue in a separation between me and my congregation. This controversy, in the progress of it, has proved not only a controversy between me and my prople, but between me and a great part of New England; there being many far and near that are warmly engaged in it. This affair has unavoidably engaged my mind, and filled up my time, and taken me off from other things. I need the prayers of my friends, that God would be with me, and direct and assist me in such a time of trial, and mercifully order the issue.

As to the epistolary controversy, Dear Sir, between you and me, about FAITH and DOUBTING, I am sorry it should *seem* to be greater than it is, through misunderstanding of one another's meaning, and that the *real* difference between us is so great as it is, in some part of the controversy.

As to the dispute about believing without spiritual light or sight, I thought I expressed my meaning in my last letter very plainly, but I kept no copy, and it might perhaps be owing to my dullness that I thought so. However I perceive I was not understood. I cannot find out by any thing you say to me on this head, that we really differ in sentiments, but only in words. I acknowledge with you that "all are bound to believe the divine testimony, and trust in Christ; and that want of spiritual light or sight does not loose from the obligation one is laid under by the divine command, to believe instantly on Christ, and at all seasons, nor excuse him, in any degree, for not believing. Even when

one wants the influence and grace of the Spirit, still he is bound to believe. Ability is not the rule of duty." I think the obligation to believe, lies on a person *who is remaining without spiritual light or sight*, or even in darkness. No darkness, no blindness, no carnality or stupidity, excuses him a moment from having as strong and lively faith and love as ever was exercised by the apostle Paul, or rather renders it not sinful in him that he is at that same moment without such a faith and love;—and yet I believe it is absurd, and of very hurtful consequence, to urge persons to believe in the dark, in the manner and in the sense in which many hundreds have done in *America*, who plainly intend a believing strongly with such a sort of strong faith or great confidence as is consistent with continuing still, even in the time of these strong acts of faith, without spiritual light; carnal, stupid, careless, and senseless. Their doctrine evidently comes to this, both in sense and effect, that it is a mere duty strongly to believe with a lightless and sightless faith, or to have a confident, although a blind, dark, and stupid faith. And such a faith has indeed been promoted exceedingly by their doctrine, and has prevailed with its dreadful effects, answerable to the nature of the cause. We have had, and have to this day, multitudes of such strong believers, whose bold, proud and stupid confidence, attended with a very wicked behaviour, has given the greatest wound to the cause of truth and vital religion that ever it suffered in America.

As to what follows in your letter, concerning a person's believing himself to be in a good state, and its being properly of the nature of faith; in this there seems to be some real difference between us. But, perhaps, there would be none, if distinctness were well observed in the use of words. If by a man's believing that he is in a good estate, be meant no more than his believing that he does believe in Christ, does love God, &c. I think there is nothing of the nature of faith in it; because knowing it, or believing it, depends on our own immediate sensation or consciousness, and not on divine testimony. True believers, in the hope they entertain of salvation, make use of the following syllogism, *whosoever believes shall be saved: I believe, therefore*, &c. Assenting to the major proposition is properly of the nature of faith, because the ground of my assent to that is divine testimony; but my assent to the minor proposition, I humbly conceive, is not of the nature of faith, because that is not grounded on divine testimony, but my own consciousness. The testimony that is the proper ground of faith is in the word of God, Rom. x. 17. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." There is such a testimony given us in the word of God, that "He that believeth shall be saved." But there is no such

testimony in the word of God, as that such an individual person in such a town in *Scotland* or *New England*, believes. There is such a proposition in the scripture, as that *Christ loves those that love him*, and therefore, this every one is bound to believe, and affirm: believing this on divine testimony is properly of the nature of faith, and for any one to doubt of it, is properly of the heinous sin of unbelief. But there is no such proposition in the scripture, nor is it any part of the gospel of Christ, that such an individual person in Northampton loves Christ. If I know that I have complacence in Christ, I know it the same way that I know I have complacence in my wife and children, viz. by the testimony of my own heart or inward consciousness. Evangelical faith has the gospel of Christ for its foundation; but that I love Christ is a proposition not contained in the gospel of Christ.

And therefore, that we may not dispute in the dark, it is necessary, that we should explain what we mean by a person's believing he is in a good estate. If thereby we mean only believing the minor of the foregoing syllogism, or such like syllogisms, I believe or I love God, it is not in the nature of faith. But if by a man's believing himself to be in a good estate, be understood his believing not only the minor, but the consequence, *therefore I shall be saved*, or *therefore God will never leave me, nor forsake me;* then a man's believing his good estate, partakes of the nature of faith; for these consequences depend on divine testimony in the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yea, I would observe farther, that a man's judging of the faith or love he finds in himself, whether they are that sort of faith and love which he finds to be saving, may depend on his reliance on scripture rules and marks, which are divine testimonies, which he may be tempted not to rely upon, from the considerarion of his great unworthiness. But his judging that he has those individual inward acts of understanding, and exercises of heart, depends on inward sensations, and not on any testimony of the word of God. The knowing present acts depends on immediate consciousness, and the knowing past acts depends on memory. And therefore the fulness of my satisfaction, that I now have such an inward act or exercise of mind, depends on the strength of sensation; and my satisfaction, that I have had them heretofore, depends on the clearness of my memory, and not on the strength of my reliance on any divine testimony; and so my doubting whether I have, or have had, such individual inward acts, is not of the nature of unbelief, though it may arise from unbelief *indirectly;* because, if I had had more faith, the actings of it would have been more sensible, and the memory of them more clear, and so I should have been better satisfied that I had them.

God seems to have given Abraham's servant, a revelation, that the damsel in whom he found such marks, viz. coming to draw water with a pitcher to that well, her readiness to give him and his camels drink, &c. should be Isaac's wife, and therefore his assenting to *this* was of the nature of faith, having divine testimony for its foundation. But his believing that Rebekah was the damsel that had these individual marks, his knowing that she came to draw water, and that she let down her pitcher, &c. was not of the nature of faith. His knowing *this* was not from divine testimony, but from the testimony of his own senses. (Vide Gen. xxiv.)

You speak of "a saint's doubting of his good estate as a part of unbelief, and the opposite of faith, considered in its full compass and latitude, as one branch of unbelief, one ingredient in unbelief; and of assurance of a man's good estate, as one thing that belongs to the exercise of faith." I do not know whether I take your meaning in these expressions. If you mean, that a person's believing himself to be in a good estate is one thing that appertains to the essence of saving faith, or that saving faith, in all that belongs to its essence, yea its perfection, cannot be without implying it, I must humbly ask leave to differ from you. That a believing that I am in a good estate, is no part or ingredient in the essence of saving faith, is evident by this, that the essence of saving faith must be complete in me, before it can be true, that I am in a good estate. If I have not as yet acted faith, yea if there be any thing wanting in me to make up the essence of saving faith, then I am not as yet in a state of salvation, and therefore can have no ground to believe that I am so. Any thing that belongs to the essence of saving faith is prior, in the order of nature, to a man's being in a [believing] state of salvation, because it is saving faith that brings him into such a state. And therefore believing that he is in such a state cannot be one thing that is essential or necessary in order to his being in such a state; for that would imply a contradiction. It would be to suppose a man's believing that he is in a good estate to be prior, in the order of nature, to his being in a good estate. But a thing cannot be both prior and posterior, antecedent and consequent, with respect to the very same thing. The real truth of a proposition is in the order of nature first, before its being believed to be true. But till a man has already all that belongs to the essence of saving faith, that proposition, *that he is in a good* [believing] *estate*, is not as yet true. All the propositions contained in the gospel, all divine testimonies that we have in God's word, are true already, are already laid for a foundation for faith, and were laid long ago. But that proposition, *I am in a good*

estate, not being one of them, is not true till I have first believed; and therefore this proposition cannot be believed to be true, till saving faith be first complete. Therefore the completeness of the act of saving faith will not make it take in a belief of this proposition, nor will the strength or perfection of the act cause it to imply this. If a man, in his first act of faith, has ever so great a conviction of God's sufficiency and faithfulness, and let his reliance on the divine testimony be ever so strong and perfect, all will have no tendency to make him believe in this proposition, *I am in a good estate*, to be true, till it be true, which it is not till the first act of faith is complete, and has made it true. A belief of divine testimony in the first act of faith, may be to any assignable degree of strength and perfection, without believing that proposition, for there is no such divine testimony then extant, nor is there any such truth extant, but in consequence of the first act of faith. Therefore, (as I said) saving faith may be with all that belongs to its essence, and that in the highest perfection, without implying a belief of my own good estate. I do not say it can be without having this immediate *effect*. But it is rather the *effect* of faith, than a *part branch* or *ingredient* of faith. And so I do not dispute whether a man's doubting of his good state may be a consequence of unbelief, (I doubt not but it is in those who are in a good state); because, if men had the exercise of faith in such a degree as they ought to have, it could not but be very sensible and plain that they had it. But yet I think this doubting of a good state is entirely a different thing from the sin of unbelief itself, and has nothing of the nature of unbelief in it, i. e. if we take doubting one's good state in the sense in which I have before explained it, viz. for doubting whether I have such individual principles and acts in my soul. Take it in a complex sense, and it may have the sin of unbelief in it; e. g. If, although I doubt not that I have such and such qualifications, I yet doubt of those consequences, for which I have divine testimony or promise; as when a person doubts not that he loves Christ, yet doubts whether *he shall receive a crown of life*. The doubting of this consequence is properly the sin of unbelief.

You say, dear Sir, "The Holy Ghost requires us to believe the reality of his work in us in all its parts just as it is;" and, a little before, "The believer's doubting whether or not he has faith, is sinful; because it is belying the Holy Ghost, denying his work in him, so there is no sin to which that doubting can so properly be reduced as unbelief."

Here I would ask leave thus to express my thoughts in a diversity from yours. I think, if it be allowed to be sinful for a believer to doubt whether he has faith, that this doubting is not the sin of unbelief on any such account as you mention, viz. as be-

testimony of the Holy Ghost. There is a ing of the being of some *work* of the the *testimony* of the Holy Ghost, as ween doubting concerning some other ying the testimony of God. It is the a man great natural abilities; and if we such a man *to believe the reality of his ist as it is*, and so that it is sinful for him at natural abilities being just as good as they to belying any testimony of God, though it be work of God, and so is diverse from the sin of un- we suppose a very eminent saint is to blame in er he has so much grace as he really has; he in- *believe the reality of God's work in him, in all its* s, yet he is not therein guilty of the sin of unbe- testimony of God, any more than the other.

ge, that for a true saint in a carnal and careless of his good state, is sinful, *more indirectly*, as the sinful, viz. the lowness and insensibility of the act- in him, and the prevalence of carnality and stupidi- sinful to be without assurance, or (as we say) *it is his* he sinfully deprives himself of it; or foregoes it, as a ng without his tools, is his sin, when he has carelessly or as it is his sin to be without strength of body, or sight of his eyes, when he has deprived himself of temperance. Not that weakness or blindness of body, ture, are sin, for they are qualities of the body, mind, the subject in which sin is inherent. It is in- y of a true saint *always* to rejoice in the light of ntenance, because sin is the cause of his being without y time, and therefore it was *indirectly* David's sin rejoicing in the light of God's countenance, at when he was committing the great iniquities of murder. But yet it is not directly a believer's duty ght of God's countenance, when God hides his er then becomes him to be troubled and to mourn. haps many other privileges of saints that are ly, and the want of them is sinful, not simply, considered. Of this kind I take the want of as- good estate to be.

's of mine, either in my book or letter, implied verance from a bad frame, does not begin with h or trusting in God. If they did, they im- ended. Doubtless if a saint comes out of grace is asleep and inactive, it must be by re- grace. It is very plainly impossible, that grace

should begin to cease to be inactive, in any other way, than by its beginning to be active. It must begin with the renewed actings of some grace or other, and I know nothing that I have said to the contrary, but that the grace that shall first begin sensibly to revive shall be faith, and that this shall lead the way to the renewed acting of all other graces, and to the farther acting of faith itself. But a person's coming out of a carnal, careless, dead frame, by, or in the reviving of grace in his soul, is quite another thing from a saint's having a strong exercise of faith, or strong hope, or strong exercise of any other grace, while yet remaining in a carnal, careless, dead frame; or, in other words, in a frame wherein grace is so far from being in strong exercise, that it is asleep and in a great measure without exercise.

There is a *holy hope*, a truly *Christian hope*, that the scripture speaks of, that is reckoned among the graces of the Spirit: and I think I should never desire or seek any other hope; for I believe no other hope has any holy or good tendency. Therefore *this* hope, *this* grace of hope alone, can properly be called a duty. But it is just as absurd to talk of the exercise of this holy hope, the strong exercise of this grace of the Spirit, in a carnal, stupid, careless frame, such *a frame yet remaining*, as it would be to talk of the strong exercises of love to God, or heavenly-mindedness, or any other grace, remaining in such a frame. It is doubtless proper, earnestly to exhort those who are in such a frame to come out of it, in and by the strong exercises of all grace; but I should not think it proper to press a man earnestly to maintain strong hope, *notwithstanding* the prevailing and continuance of great carnality and stupidity, (which is plainly the case of the people I opposed). For this is plainly to press people to an unholy hope, a strong hope that is no Christian grace, but strong and wicked presumption; and the promoting of this has most evidently been the effect of such a method of dealing with souls in innumerable multitudes of awful instances.

You seem, Sir, to suppose, that God's manner of dealing with his saints, *while in a secure and careless frame*, is *first* to give assurance of their good state *while they remain in such a frame*, and to make use of that assurance as a mean to bring them out of such a frame. Here, again, I must beg leave to differ from you, and to think, that none of the instances or texts you adduce from scripture, do at all prove the point. I think it is God's manner, first to awaken their consciences, and to bring them to reflect upon themselves, and to bring them to feel their own calamity which they have brought upon themselves by so departing from God, (by which an end is put to their carelessness and security), and again earnestly and carefully to seek God's face before they [illegible] before God restores the comfortable and joyful

sense of his favour; and I think this is abundantly evident both by scripture and experience. You must insist on *Jonah* as a clear instance of the thing you lay down. You observe that he says ch. ii. "I said I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again towards thy holy temple." Ver. 5. 7. "When my soul fainted within me; I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, even into thine holy temple." You speak of these words as expressing an assurance of his good state and of God's favour; (I will not now dispute whether they do or not); and you speak of this exercise of assurance, &c. as *his practice in an evil frame, and in a careless frame; for he slept securely in the sides of the ship*, manifesting *dismal security, awful carelessness in a carnal frame.* That Jonah was in a careless secure frame when he was asleep in the sides of the ship, I do not deny. But, dear Sir, does that prove that he remained still in a careless secure frame, when in his heart he said these things in the fish's belly, chap. ii. 4, 7.? does it prove that he remained careless after he was awakened, and saw the furious storm, and owned it was the fruit of God's anger towards him for his sins? and does it prove, that he still remained careless after the whale had swallowed him, when he seemed to himself to be *in the belly of hell?* when *the water compassed him about, even to the soul, and*, as he says, *all God's waters and billows passed over him, and he was ready to despair when he went down to the bottoms of the mountains*, was ready to think that God had cast him out of his sight, and confined him in a prison, that he could never escape, *the earth with her bars was about him, for ever, and his soul fainted within him.* He was brought into *this* condition *after* his sleeping securely in the side of the ship, *before* he said, "I will look again towards thine holy temple, &c." He was evidently first awakened out of carelessness and security, and brought into distress, before he was comforted.

The other place you also much insist on, concerning the people of Israel, is very much like this. Before God comforted them with the testimonies of his favour, after their backslidings, he first, by severe chastisements, together with the awakening influences of his Spirit, brought them out of their *carelessness* and carnal *security*. It appears by many scriptures, that this was God's way of dealing with that people. So Hos. chap. ii. God first "hedged up her ways with thorns, and made a wall that she could not find her paths. And took away her corn and wine, and wool and flax, destroyed her vines and fig-trees, and caused her mirth to cease;" and, by this means, brought her to herself, brought her out of her security, carelessness and deep sleep, very much as the prodigal son was brought to himself. God "brought her first into the wilderness, before he spake comfortably to her,

and opened to her a door of hope." By her distress first brought her to say, "I will go and return to my first husband; and then, when God spake comfortably to her, she called him "*Ishi*, my husband;" and God did as it were renewedly betroth her unto him. That passage Hosea ii. is very parallel with Jer. iii. One place serves well to illustrate and explain the other, and that it was God's way of dealing with his people Israel, after their apostacy and carnal security, *first* to awaken them, and under a sense of their sin and misery, to bring them solicitously to seek his face, before he gave them sensible evidence of his favour; and not to awaken out of security, by first making manifest his favour to them*.

And, besides, I would observe, that in Jer. iii. the prophecy is not concerning the recovery of backsliding saints, or the mystical church, which, though she had corrupted herself, still continued to be God's wife: It is concerning apostate Israel, that had forsaken and renounced her husband, and gone after other lovers, and whom God had renounced, put away, and given her a bill of divorce, (ver. 8.) so that her recovery could not be by giving her assurance of her good estate as still remaining his wife, and that God was already married unto her, for that was not true, and is not consistent with the context. And whereas it is said, ver. 14, "Return, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you, and I will take you one of a city, &c." *I am married*, in the Hebrew, is in the preterperfect tense; but you know, Sir, that in the language of prophecy, the pretertense is very commonly put for the future; and whereas it is said, ver. 19, "How shall I put thee among the children? And I said, Thou shalt call me my father." I acknowledge this expression here, my Father, and that Rom. viii. 15, is the language of faith. It is so two ways, 1st, It is such language of the soul as is the immediate effect of a lively faith. I acknowledge, that the lively exercises of faith do naturally produce satisfaction of a good state *as their immediate effect*. 2nd, It is language which, in another sense, does properly and naturally express the very act of faith itself, yea, the first act of faith in a sinner, before which he never was in a good state. As thus, supposing a man in distress, pursued by his enemies that sought his life, should have the gates of several fortresses set open before him, and should be called to from each of them to fly thither for refuge; and viewing them all, and one appearing strong and safe, but the rest insufficient, he should accept the invitation to that one, and fly thither with this language, "This is my fortress; this is my refuge. In vain is sal-

* This is evident by many scriptures; as, Lev. xxvi. 40—42. Deut. xxxii. 36—39. 1 Kings viii. 21, 22. chap. i. 4—8. Ezek. xx. 35, 36, 37. Hos. v. 15, with chap. vi. 1—3. chap. xiii. 9, 10. chap. xiv. throughout.

vation looked for from the other. Behold I come to thee; this is my sure defence." Not that he means that he is already within the fortress, and so in a good estate. But this is my chosen fortress, in the strength of which I trust, and to which I betake myself for safety. So if a woman were at once to be solicited by many lovers, to give herself to them in a married state, and beholding the superior excellencies of one far above all the rest, should betake herself to him, with this language, "This is my husband, behold I come unto thee, thou art my spouse." Not that she means that she is already married to him, but that he is her chosen husband, &c. Thus God offers himself to sinners as their Saviour, God and Father; and the language of the heart of him that accepts the offer by active faith, is, "Thou art my Saviour; in vain is salvation hoped for from others that offer themselves. Thou art my God and Father." Not that he is already his child, but he chooses him, and comes to him, that he may be one of his children; as in Jer. iii. 19. Israel calls God his Father, as the way to be *put among the children*, and to be one of them, and not as being one already; and in ver. 21, 22, 23, she is not brought out of a careless and secure state by knowing that the Lord is her God, but she is first brought to consideration and sense of her sin and misery, weeping and supplications for mercy and conviction of the vanity of other saviours and refuges, not only before she has assurance of her good estate, but before she is brought to fly to God for refuge, that she may be in a good estate.

As to the instance of Job, I would only say this: I think while in his state of sore affliction, though he had some great exercises of infirmity and impatience under his extreme trials, yet he was very far from being in such a frame as I intended, when I spoke of a *secure*, *careless*, *carnal* frame, &c. I doubt not, nor did I ever question it, that the saints' hope and knowledge of their good state, is in many cases of excellent benefit, to help them against temptation and the exercises of corruption.

With regard to the case of extraordinary temptation, and buffetting of Satan, which you mention, I do not very well know what to say further. I have often found my own insufficiency as a counsellor in such like cases, wherein melancholy and bodily distemper have so great a hand, and give Satan so great advantage, as appears to me in the case you mention. If the Lord do not help, whence should we help? If some Christian friends of such afflicted and (as it were) possessed persons, would, from time to time, pray and fast for them, it might be a proper exercise of Christian charity, and the likeliest way I know for relief. I kept no copy of my former letter to you, and so do not remember fully what I have already said concerning this case. But this I have

often found with such melancholy people, that the greatest difficulty does not lie in giving them good advice, but in persuading them to take it. One thing I think of great importance, which is, that such persons should go on in a steady course of performance of all duties, both of their general and particular calling, without suffering themselves to be diverted from it by any violence of Satan, or specious pretence of his whatsoever, properly ordering, proportioning and timing all sorts of duties, duties to God, public, private, and secret, and duties to man, relative duties, of business and conversation, family duties, duties of friendship and good neighbourhood, duly proportioning labour and rest, intentness and relaxation, without suffering one duty to crowd out or intrench upon another. If such persons could be persuaded to this, I think, in this way, they would be best guarded against the devil, and he would soonest be discouraged, and a good state of body would be most likely to be gained, and persons would act most as if they trusted and rested in God, and would be most in the way of his help and blessing.

With regard to what you write concerning immediate revelations, I have thought of it, and I find I cannot say any thing to purpose, without drawing out this letter to a very extraordinary length, and I am already got to such length, that I had need ask your excuse. I have written enough to tire your patience.

It has indeed been with great difficulty that I have found time to write much. If you knew my extraordinary circumstances, I doubt not, you would excuse my not writing any more. I acknowledge the subject you mention is very important. Probably if God spares my life, and gives me opportunity, I may write largely upon it. I know not how Providence will dispose of me, I am going to be cast on the wide world, with my large family of ten children.—I humbly request your prayers for me under my difficulties and trials.

As to the state of religion in this place and this land, it is at present very sorrowful and dark. But I must, for a more particular account of things, refer you to my letter to Mr. M'LAUREN, of Glasgow, and Mr. ROBE. So, asking a remembrance in your prayers, I must conclude, by subscribing myself, with much esteem and respect,

Your obliged Brother and Servant,
JONATHAN EDWARDS.

P. S. *July* 3, 1750. Having had no leisure to finish the preparation of my letters to Scotland before this time, by reason of the extraordinary troubles, hurries and confusions of my unusual circumstances, I can now inform you, that the controversy between me and my people, that I mentioned in the beginning of my let-

ter, has issued in a separation. An ecclesiastical council was called on the affair, who sat here the week before last, who, by a majority of one voice, determined an immediate separation to be necessary; and accordingly my pastoral relation to my people was dissolved on June 22. If I can procure the printed accounts from Boston of the proceedings of the council, I will give order to my friend there to inclose them with this letter, and direct them to you.—I desire your prayers, that I may take a suitable notice of the frowns of heaven on me and this people, (between whom was once so great an union,) in bringing to pass such a separation between us; and that these troubles may be sanctified to me, that God would overrule this event for his own glory, (which doubtless many adversaries will rejoice and triumph in,) that God would open a door for my future usefulness, and provide for me and my numerous family, and take a fatherly care of us in our present unsettled, uncertain circumstances, being cast on the wide world.

J. E.

FIVE DISCOURSES

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS,

NEARLY CONCERNING THE GREAT AFFAIR

OF THE

SOUL'S ETERNAL SALVATION,

VIZ.

I. *Justification by Faith alone.*
II. *Pressing into the Kingdom of God.*
III. *Ruth's Resolution.*
IV. *The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.*
V. *The Excellency of Jesus Christ.*

DELIVERED AT NORTHAMPTON,

Chiefly at the time of the late wonderful pouring out of the Spirit of God there.

DEUT. IV. 9.

Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.

PREFACE.

THE following discourses were all, excepting the last, delivered in the time of the late wonderful work of God's power and grace in this place, and are now published* on the earnest desire of those to whom they were preached. These particular discourses are fixed upon, and designed for the press, rather than others that were delivered in that remarkable season, by *their* election. What has determined them in their choice, is the experience they hope they have had of special benefit to their souls from *these discourses*. Their desire to have them in their hands from the press has been long manifested, and often expressed to me; their earnestness in it is evident from this, that though it be a year of the greatest public charge to them that ever has been, by reason of the expense of building a new meeting house, yet they chose rather to be at this additional expence now, though it be very considerable, than to have it delayed another year. I am fully sensible that their value for these discourses has arisen more from the frame in which they heard them, and the good which, through the sovereign blessing of God, they have received, than any real worth in them. And whatever the discourses are in themselves, yet those who heard them are not to be blamed or wondered at, if that is dear to them, which they hope God has made a means of saving and everlasting benefit. They have much insisted on this argument with me, to induce me to comply with their desire, *viz.* that they hoped the reading of these discourses would have a tendency in some measure to renew the same effect in them that was wrought in the hearing, and revive the memory of that great work of God, which this town has so much cause ever to remember; which argument has been of principal weight with me, to incline me to think it to be my duty to comply with their desire; though I cannot say there are no other considerations concurring to induce me to it.

With respect to the discourse on *justification*, besides the desire of my people to make it public, I have been advised to it by certain reverend gentlemen, my fathers, that happened to be the hearers of it, (or, at least, part of it,) when preached, whose opinion and advice, in such an affair, I thought should be of as great weight with me as of most that I was acquainted with.

The beginning of the late work of God in this place was so circumstanced, that I could not but look upon it as a remarkable testimony of God's approbation of the doctrine of *justification by faith alone*, here asserted and vindicated.—By the noise that had a little before been raised in this county concerning that doctrine, people here seemed to

* Viz. at Boston, 1738.

have their minds put into an unusual ruffle; some were brought to doubt of that way of acceptance with God, which from their infancy they had been taught to be the only way; and many were engaged more thoroughly to look into the grounds of those doctrines in which they had been educated. The following discourse of justification, that was preached (though not so fully as it is here printed) at two public lectures, seemed to be remarkably blessed, not only to establish the judgments of many in this truth, but to engage their hearts in a more earnest pursuit of justification, in that way that had been explained and defended; and *at that time*, while I was greatly reproached for defending this doctrine in the pulpit, and just upon my suffering a very open abuse for it, God's work wonderfully brake forth amongst us, and souls began to flock to Christ, as the Saviour in whose righteousness alone they hoped to be justified. So that this was the doctrine on which this work in its beginning was founded, as it evidently was in the whole progress of it.

A great objection that is made against the old protestant doctrine of *justification by faith alone*, and the scheme of those divines that have chiefly defended it, by those that value themselves upon the new-fashioned divinity, is, that the scheme is too much encumbered with speculative niceties, and subtle distinctions, that, they say, serve only to involve the subject in endless controversy and dispute; whereas, their scheme, they suppose, is a plain, easy, and natural account of things.—But their prejudice against distinctions in divinity, I humbly conceive, is carried to a great extreme. So great, so general, and loud a cry has been raised by modern philosophers and divines against the subtle distinctions of the schoolmen, for their learned impertinence, that many are ready to start at any thing that looks like nice distinction, and to condemn it for nonsense without examination. Upon the same account, we might expect to have St. Paul's epistles, that are full of very nice distinctions, called nonsense and unintelligible jargon, had not they the good luck to be universally received by all Christians as part of the holy scriptures.

Our discovering the absurdity of the impertinent and abstruse distinctions of the school divines, may justly give us a distaste of *such distinctions* as have a shew of learning in obscure words, but convey no light to the mind; but I can see no reason why we should also discard those that are clear and rational, and can be made out to have their foundation in truth, although they may be such as require some diligence and attention of mind clearly to apprehend them. So much of the scripture scheme of justification as is absolutely necessary to salvation, may be very plain, and level with the understandings of the weakest Christians; but it does not therefore follow, that the scripture teaches us no more about it that would be exceeding profitable for us to know, and by gaining the knowledge of which, we may obtain a more full and clear understanding of this doctrine, and be better able to solve doubts that may arise concerning it, and to defend it from the sophist y and cavils of subtle opposers.

It is so in most of the great doctrines of Christianity, that are looked upon as first principles of the Christian faith, that though they contain something that is easy, yet they also contain great mysteries; and there

is room for progress in the knowledge of them, and doubtless will be to the end of the world. But it is unreasonable to expect that this progress should be made in the knowledge of things that are high and mysterious, without accurate distinction and close application of thought: and it is also unreasonable to think that this doctrine, of the justification of a sinner by a mediator, should be without mysteries. We all own it to be a matter of pure revelation, above the light of natural reason, and that it is what the infinite wisdom of God revealed in the gospel mainly appears in, that he hath found out such a way of reconciliation of which neither men nor angels could have thought. And after all, shall we expect that this way, when found out and declared, shall contain nothing but what is obvious to the most cursory and superficial view, and may be fully and clearly comprehended without some diligence, accuracy, and careful distinction?

If the distinctions I have made use of in handling this subject are found to be inconsistent, trivial, and unscriptural niceties, tending only to cloud the subject, I ought to be willing that they should be rejected; but if on due examination they are found both scriptural and rational, I humbly conceive that it will be unjust to condemn them, merely because they are distinctions, under a notion that niceness in divinity never helps it, but always perplexes and darkens it. It is to God's own revelation that I make my appeal, by which alone we can know in what way he will be pleased again to receive into favour those who have offended him and incurred his displeasure. If there be any part of the scheme here laid down, or any distinction here used, not warranted by scripture, let it be rejected; and if any opposite scheme can be found that is more easy and plain, having fewer and more rational distinctions, and not demonstrably inconsistent with itself, and with the word of God, let it be received. Let the Arminian scheme of justification by our own virtue be as *plain* and natural as it will, if at the same time it is *plainly* contrary to the certain and demonstrable doctrine of the gospel, as contained in the scriptures, we are bound to reject it, unless we reject the scriptures themselves as perplexed and absurd, and make ourselves wiser than God, and pretend to know his mind better than himself.

This discourse on justification is printed much larger than it was preached; but the practical discourses that follow have but little added to them, and now appear in that very plain and unpolished dress in which they were first prepared and delivered; which was mostly at a time when the circumstances of the auditory they were preached to, were enough to make a minister neglect, forget, and despise such ornaments as politeness and modishness of style and method, when coming as a messenger from God to souls deeply impressed with a sense of their danger of God's everlasting wrath, to treat with them about their eternal salvation.—However unable I am to preach or write politely, if I would, yet I have this to comfort me under such a defect, that God has shewed us he does not need such talents in men to carry on his own work, and that he has been pleased to smile upon and bless a very plain unfashionable way of preaching. And have we not reason to think, that it has been, and ever will be God's manner, to bless the foolishness to save them that believe, let the elegance of language

and excellency of style be carried to never so great a height, by the learning and wit of the present and future ages?

What is published at the end, concerning the excellency of Christ, is added on my own motion; thinking that a discourse on such an evangelical subject would properly follow others that were chiefly awakening, and that something of the excellency of the Saviour was proper to succeed those things that were to shew the necessity of *salvation*. I pitched upon that particular discourse, partly because I had been earnestly importuned for a copy of it for the press, by some in another town in whose hearing it was occasionally preached.

I request every reader's candid acceptance and due improvement of what is here offered; and especially would earnestly beseech the people of my own charge, not to fail of improving these discourses to those purposes that they have mentioned to me as the ends for which they desired to have them published, that I may have no cause to repent of my labour in transcribing, nor they of their cost in printing them. Happy would it be for us, and an unspeakable mercy of heaven, if God should bless what is here printed, so to revive the memory of the past great work of God amongst us, and the lively impressions and sense of divine things that persons then had on their minds, and to cause us to lament our declensions, so that the same work might renewedly break forth and go on amongst us! Sure we have seen much to excite our longings after such a mercy, and to encourage us to cry to God for it!

DISCOURSE I.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE.

ROM. IV. 5.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

THE following things may be noted in this verse:

1. That justification respects a man as ungodly. This is evident by these words,——*that justifieth the ungodly;* which cannot imply less, than that God, in the act of justification, has no regard to any thing in the person justified, as godliness, or any goodness in him; but that immediately before this act, God beholds him only as an ungodly creature; so that godliness in the person to be justified is not so antecedent to his justification as to be the ground of it. When it is said that God justifies the ungodly, it is as absurd to suppose that our godliness, taken as some goodness in us, is the ground of our justification; as, when it is said that Christ gave sight to the blind, to suppose that sight was prior to, and the ground of that act of mercy in Christ; or as, if it should be said that such an one by his bounty has made a poor man rich, to suppose that it was the wealth of this poor man that was the ground of this bounty towards him, and was the price by which it was procured.

2. It appears, that *by him that worketh not*, in this verse, is not meant one who merely does not conform to the ceremonial law; because *he that worketh not*, and *the ungodly*, are evidently synonimous expressions, or what signify the same, as appears by the manner of their connection; if not, to what purpose is the latter expression, *the ungodly*, brought in? The context gives no other occasion for it, but to shew that by the grace of the gospel, God in justification has no regard to any godliness of ours.

The foregoing verse is, "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." In *that* verse, it is evident, gospel grace consists in the reward being given *without works*; and in *this* verse, which immediately follows it, and in sense is connected with it, gospel grace consists in a man's being justified as *ungodly*. By which it is most plain, that by *him that worketh not*, and him that is *ungodly*, are meant the same thing: and that therefore not only works of the ceremonial law are excluded in this business of justification, but works of morality and godliness.

It is evident in the words, that by the faith here spoken of, by which we are justified, is not meant the same thing as a course of obedience or righteousness, since the expression by which this faith is here denoted, is *believing on him that justifies the ungodly*. ——They that oppose the Solifidians, as they call them, greatly insist on it, that we should take the words of scripture concerning this doctrine in their most natural and obvious meaning; and how do they cry out, of our clouding this doctrine with obscure metaphors, and unintelligible figures of speech? But is this to interpret scripture according to its most obvious meaning, when the scripture speaks of our *believing on him that justifies the ungodly*, or the *breakers of his law*, to say, that the meaning of it is performing a course of obedience to his law, and avoiding the breaches of it? Believing on God as a *justifier*, certainly is a different thing from submitting to God as a *lawgiver*; especially believing on him as a justifier of *the ungodly*, or *rebels against the lawgiver*.

4. It is evident that the subject of justification is looked upon as destitute of any righteousness in himself, by that expression, *it is counted, or imputed to him for righteousness*.—The phrase, as the apostle uses it here and in the context, manifestly imports, that God of his sovereign grace is pleased, in his dealings with the sinner, so to regard one that has no righteousness, that the consequence shall be the same as if he had. This however may be from the respect it bears to something that is indeed righteous. It is plain that this is the force of the expression in the preceding verses. In the last verse but one, it is manifest, the apostle lays the stress of his argument for the free grace of God,—from that text of the Old Testament about Abraham,—on the word *counted* or *imputed*; and this is the thing that he supposed God to shew his grace in, *viz.* in his *counting* something for righteousness, in his consequential dealings with Abraham, that was no righteousness in itself. And in the next verse which immedintely precedes the text, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," the word there translated *reckoned*, is the same that in the other verses is rendered *imputed*, and *counted*.

and it is as much as if the apostle had said, "As to *him that works,* there is no need of any gracious *reckoning* or *counting* it for righteousness, and causing the reward to follow as if it were a righteousness; for if he has works, he has that which is a righteousness in itself, to which the reward properly belongs." This is further evident by the words that follow, verse 6, "Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." What can here be meant by imputing righteousness without works, but imputing righteousness to him that has none of his own? verse 7, 8, "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." How are these words of David to the apostle's purpose? or how do they prove any such thing, as that righteousness is imputed without works, unless it be because the word *imputed* is used, and the subject of the imputation is mentioned as a sinner, and consequently destitute of a moral righteousness? For David says no such thing, as that he is forgiven without the works of the ceremonial law; there is no hint of the ceremonial law, or reference to it, in the words. I will therefore venture to infer this *doctrine* from the words, for the subject of my present discourse, *viz.*

That we are justified only by faith in Christ, and not by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own.

Such an assertion as this, I am sensible, many would be ready to call absurd, as betraying a great deal of ignorance, and containing much inconsistence, but I desire every one's patience till I have done.

In handling this doctrine, I would,

I. Explain the *meaning* of it, and shew how I would be understood by such an assertion.

II. Proceed to the consideration of the evidence of the *truth* of it.

III. Shew how evangelical odedience is concerned in this affair.

IV. Answer objections.

V. Consider the importance of the doctrine.

I. I would explain the meaning of the doctrine, or shew in what sense I assert it, and would endeavour to evince the truth of it; which may be done in answer to these two inquiries, *viz.* 1. What is meant by being justified? What is meant when it is said, that this is, "by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own?"

First, I would shew what justification is, or what I suppose is meant in scripture by being justified.

A person is to be *justified*, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment, and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life. That we should take the word in such a sense, and understand it as the judge's accepting a person as having both a negative and positive righteousness belonging to him, and looking on him therefore as not only free from any obligation to punishment, but also as just and righteous, and so entitled to a positive reward, is not only most agreeable to the etymology and natural import of the word, which signifies to pass one for righteous in judgment, but also manifestly agreeable to the force of the word as used in scripture.

Some suppose that nothing more is intended in scripture by justification, than barely the remission of sins. If so, it is very strange, if we consider the nature of the case; for it is most evident, and none will deny, that it is with respect to the rule or law of God we are under, that we are said in scripture to be either justified or condemned. Now what is it to justify a person as the subject of a law or rule, but to judge him as standing right with respect to that rule? To justify a person in a particular case, is to approve of him as standing right, as subject to the law in that case; and to justify in general is to pass him in judgment, as standing right in a state correspondent to the law or rule in general: but certainly, in order to a person's being looked on as standing right with respect to the rule in general, or in a state corresponding with the law of God, more is needful than not having the guilt of sin; for whatever that law is, whether a new or an old one, doubtless something positive is needed in order to its being answered. We are no more justified by the voice of the law, or of him that judges according to it, by a mere pardon of sin, than Adam, our first surety, was justified by the law, at the first point of his existence, before he had fulfilled the obedience of the law, or had so much as any trial whether he would fulfil it or no. If Adam had finished his course of perfect obedience, he would have been justified; and certainly his justification would have implied something more than what is merely negative; he would have been approved of, as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and accordingly would have been adjudged to the reward of it. So Christ, our second surety, (in whose justification all whose surety he is, are virtually justified,) was not justified till he had done the work the Father had appointed him, and kept the Father's commandments through all trials; and then in his resurrection he was justified. When he had been put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, 1 Pet. iii. 18, then he that was manifest in the flesh was justified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16; but God, when he justified him in raising him from the dead, did not

only release him from his humiliation for sin, and acquit him from any further suffering or abasement for it, but admitted him to that eternal and immortal life, and to the beginning of that exaltation that was the reward of what he had done. And indeed the justification of a believer is no other than his being admitted to communion in the justification of this head and surety of all believers; for as Christ suffered the punishment of sin, not as a private person, but as our surety; so when after this suffering he was raised from the dead, he was therein justified, not as a private person, but as the surety and representative of all that should believe in him. So that he was raised again not only for his own, but also for our justification, according to the apostle, Rom. iv. 25. "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." And therefore it is that the apostle says, as he does in Rom. viii. 34. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

But that a believer's justification implies not only remission of sins, or acquittance from the wrath due to it, but also an admittance to a title to that glory which is the reward of righteousness, is more directly taught in the scriptures, particularly in Rom. v. 1, 2, where the apostle mentions both these as joint benefits implied in justification: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So remission of sin, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together as what are jointly obtained by faith in Christ, Acts xxvi. 18. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in me." Both these are without doubt implied in that passing from death to life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation, John v. 24. "Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." I proceed now,

Secondly, To shew what is meant when it is said, that this justification is by faith only, and not by any virtue or goodness of our own.

This inquiry may be subdivided into two, *viz.*

1. How it is by *faith*. 2. How it is by faith *alone*, without any manner of goodness of ours.

1. How justification is by *faith*.—Here the great difficulty has been about the import and force of the particle *by*, or what is that influence that faith has in the affair of justification that is expressed in scripture by being justified by faith.

Here, if I may humbly express what seems evident to me, though faith be indeed the condition of justification so as nothing else is, yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity. In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification: in another sense, other qualifications and acts are conditions of salvation and justification too. There seems to be a great deal of ambiguity in such expressions as are commonly used, (which yet we are forced to use,) such as condition of salvation, what is required in order to salvation or justification, the terms of the covenant, and the like; and I believe they are understood in very different senses by different persons. And besides, as the word condition is very often understood in the common use of language, faith is not the only thing in us that is the condition of justification; for by the word condition, as it is very often (and perhaps most commonly) used, we mean any thing that may have the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly connected with the consequent, especially if the proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied. If it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing. But in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation and justification; for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, with which justification shall be, and without which it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in scripture in conditional propositions with justification and salvation, in multitudes of places; such are love to God, and love to our brethren, forgiving men their trespasses, and many other good qualifications and acts. And there are many other things besides faith, which are directly proposed to us, to be pursued or performed by us, in order to eternal life, which if they are done, or obtained, we shall have eternal life, and if not done, or not obtained, we shall surely perish. And if faith were the only condition of justification in this sense, I do not apprehend that to say faith was the condition of justification, would express the sense of that phrase of scripture, of being justified by faith. There is a difference between being justified by a thing and that thing universally, necessarily, and inseparably attending justification; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified by. It is not the inseparable connection with justification that the Holy Ghost would signify (or that is naturally signified) by such a phrase, but some particular influence that faith

has in the affair, or some certain dependence that effect has on its influence.

Some, aware of this, have supposed, that the influence or dependence might well be expressed by faith's being the *instrument* of our justification; which has been misunderstood, and injuriously represented, and ridiculed by those that have denied the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as though they had supposed faith was used as an instrument in the hand of God, whereby he performed and brought to pass that act of his, *viz.* approving and justifying the believer. Whereas it was not intended that faith was the instrument wherewith God justifies, but the instrument wherewith we receive justification; not the instrument wherewith the justifier acts in justifying, but wherewith the receiver of justification acts in accepting justification. But yet, it must be owned, this is an obscure way of speaking, and there must certainly be some impropriety in calling it an instrument wherewith we receive or accept justification; for the very persons who thus explain the matter, speak of faith as being the reception or acceptance itself; and if so, how can it be the instrument of reception or acceptance? Certainly there is a difference between the act and the instrument. Besides, by their own descriptions of faith, Christ the mediator, by whom and his righteousness by which we are justified, is more directly the object of this acceptance and justification, which is the benefit arising therefrom more indirectly; and therefore, if faith be an instrument, it is more properly the instrument by which we receive Christ, than the instrument by which we receive justification.

But I humbly conceive we have been ready to look too far to find out what that influence of faith in our justification is, or what is that dependence of this effect on faith, signified by the expression of being justified by faith, overlooking that which is most obviously pointed forth in the expression, *viz.* that (there being a mediator that has purchased justification,) faith in this mediator is that which renders it a meet and suitable thing, in the sight of God, that the believer, rather than others, should have this purchased benefit assigned to him. There is this benefit purchased, which God sees it to be a more meet and suitable thing that it should be assigned to some rather than others, because he sees them differently qualified; that qualification wherein the meetness to this benefit, as the case stands, consists, is that in us by which we are justified. If Christ had not come into the world and died, &c. to purchase justification, no qualification whatever in us could render it a meet or fit thing that we should be justified. But the case being as it now stands, *viz.* that Christ has actually purchased justification by his own blood for infinitely unworthy creatures, there may be certain qualifications found in some persons, which,

either from the relation it bears to the mediator and his merits, or on some other account, is the thing that in the sight of God renders it a meet and condecent thing, that they should have an interest in this purchased benefit, and of which if any are destitute, it renders it an unfit and unsuitable thing that they should have it. The wisdom of God in his constitutions doubtless appears much in the fitness and beauty of them, so that those things are established to be done that are fit to be done, and that these things are connected in his constitution that are agreeable one to another.—So God justifies a believer according to his revealed constitution, without doubt, because he sees something in this qualification that, as the case stands, renders it a fit thing that such should be justified; whether it be because faith is the instrument, or as it were the hand, by which he that has purchased justification is apprehended and accepted, or because it is the acceptance itself, or whatever else. To be justified, is to be approved of God as a proper subject of pardon, with a right to eternal life; and therefore, when it is said that we are justified by faith, what else can be understood by it, than that faith is that by which we are rendered approvable, fitly so, and indeed, as the case stands, proper subjects of this benefit?

This is something different from faith being the *condition* of justification, though inseparably connected with justification. So are many other things besides faith; and yet nothing in us but faith renders it meet that we should have justification assigned to us; as I shall presently shew in answer to the next inquiry, *viz.*

2. How this is said to be by faith *alone*, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own. This may seem to some to be attended with two difficulties, *viz.* how this can be said to be by faith alone, without any virtue or goodness of ours, when faith itself is a virtue, and one part of our goodness, and is not only some manner of goodness of ours, but is a very excellent qualification, and one chief part of the inherent holiness of a Christian? And if it be a part of our inherent goodness or excellency (whether it be this part or any other) that renders it a condecent or congruous thing that we should have this benefit of Christ assigned to us, what is this less than what they mean who talk of a merit of congruity? And moreover, if this part of our Christain holiness qualifies us, in the sight of God, for this benefit of Christ, and renders it a fit or meet thing, in his sight, that we should have it, why should not other parts of holiness, and conformity to God, which are also very excellent, and have as much of the image of Christ in them, and are no less lovely in God's eyes, qualify us as much, and have as much influence to render us meet, in God's sight, for such a benefit as this? Therefore I answer,

When it is said, that we are not justified by any righteousness or goodness of our *own*, what is meant is, that it is not out of respect to the excellency or goodness of any qualifications or acts in us whatsoever, that God judges it meet that this benefit of Christ should be ours; and it is not, in any wise, on account of any excellency or value that there is in faith, that it appears in the sight of God a meet thing, that he who believes should have this benefit of Christ assigned to him, but purely from the relation faith has to the person in whom this benefit is to be had, or as it unites to that mediator, in and by whom we are justified. Here, for the greater clearness, I would particularly explain myself under several propositions.

(1.) It is certain that there is some union or relation that the people of Christ stand in to him, that is expressed in scripture, from time to time, by being *in Christ*, and is represented frequently by those metaphors of being members of Christ, or being united to him as members to the head, and branches to the stock*, and is compared to a marriage union between husband and wife. I do not now pretend to determine of what sort this union is; nor is it necessary to my present purpose to enter into any manner of disputes about it. If any are disgusted at the word *union*, as obscure and unintelligible, the word *relation* equally serves my purpose. I do not now desire to determine any more about it, than all, of all sorts, will readily allow, *viz.* that there is a peculiar *relation* between true Christians and Christ, which there is not between him and others; and which is signified by those metaphorical expressions in scripture, of being in Christ, being members of Christ, &c†.

* "Our Saviour compares his mystical body, that is his church, to a vine, which his Father, whom he compares to a husbandman, hath planted; *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.* To represent to us the union that is betwixt Christ and all true Christians, and the influence of grace and spiritual life, which all that are united to him do derive and receive from him, he sets it forth to us by the resemblance of a vine and branches. As there is a natural vital union between the vine and the branches, so there is a spiritual union between Christ and true Christians; and this union is the cause of our fruitfulness in the works of obedience and a good life. There are some indeed that seem to be grafted into Christ by an outward profession of Christianity, who yet derive no influence from him, so as to bring forth fruit, because they are not vitally united to him."—*Dr. Tillotson, in his 3d vol. of Serm.* p. 307.

By this it appears that the vital union between Christ and true Christians, which is much more of a mystery than the relative union, and necessarily implies it, was not thought an unreasonable doctrine by one of the greatest divines on the other side of the question in hand.

† The word "*union*," in this connexion, is both more intelligible and more appropriate, than the word *relation*; since in this connexion the latter is the consequence of the former. As the doctrine of a *vital union* to Christ is fundamentally important in Christianity, and inseparable from the doctrine of justification; and as our author passes it over with so much brevity, a few observations upon it in this place may appear the more needful.

(2.) This *relation* or *union* to Christ, whereby Christians are said to be in Christ, (whatever it be,) is the ground of their right to his benefits. This needs no proof; the reason of the thing, at first blush, demonstrates it. It is exceeding evident also by scripture, 1 John v. 12. "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." 1 Cor. i. 30. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us—righteousness." First we must be *in him*, and then he will be made righteousness or justification to us. Eph. i. 6. "Who hath made us accepted in the beloved." Our being *in him* is the ground of our being accepted. So it is in those unions to which the Holy

1. The scriptures are not only full of the *fact*, but they abound with *illustrations* of it. The first part of John vx. is full and explicit to this purpose.

2. What the scriptures assert and illustrate, is abundantly corroborated by the *reasonableness* of the thing. To suppose the reality of *vital religion* without a corresponding *vital union* is to suppose an important effect without an adequate cause, as shall be further shewn.

3. The question then is, What is the *immediate cause* of this vital union? Now as the union subsisting is between the Spirit of *Christ* and *man*, the immediate *cause* must be in the one or the other of these, or in both at the same instant, or in neither. If the immediate cause be in MAN, he makes his approach to Christ either as a carnal or a spiritual man, for there is no conceivable medium. But the idea of a carnal man uniting himself to Christ in order to form a vital union, is both unscriptural and unreasonable. It is unscriptural; for the scripture asserts that "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" how then can it be the cause of a vital union? "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus;"—"and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;"—it is not therefore the carnal man that unites himself to Christ, or quickens himself in order to effect it. It is also unreasonable; for it supposes a glorious effect without an adequate cause. The effect is spiritual, while the cause is carnal, which are not only different but even directly opposite. What ideas can be more contradictory, or sentiment more unreasonable?

4. The supposition of two simultaneous causes, the one being the Spirit of Christ, and the other the carnal man, involves the same inconsistency. For how can the mere circumstance of time, irrespective of causal influence, make any difference? If the carnal mind be adequate to unite itself to Christ, at one time, why not at another time as well, except some causal influence makes the difference? For surely no one can suppose that some individual moment of time, as distinguished from others preceding, constitutes the cause of difference.

5. To suppose a spiritual man, whether by the exercise of his faith or by any other mental act, in the cause of a vital union, is no less inconsistent than the former suppositions. For how came he to be a spiritual man without a spiritual causal influence? But if such influence be admitted as a pre-disposing cause of his vital acts, it is incumbent on the objector to shew that such causal influence may take place without vital union. This, I am persuaded no one can do. It is contrary to all analogy, and to every sound principle of true philosophy. It is contrary to Christian experience and revealed statements. What effect in physical nature can be produced, which does not imply a causal union? Does not the divine energy pervade all second causes in the way of union with them, in order to the production of their effects? and what miraculous effects have ever been produced without a present uniting cause? For instance, when Lazarus came forth from death to life, was there not an uniting causal influence to produce the change? and if we appeal to an experienced intelligent Christian, will he not own, will he not maintain, according to his views of revealed truth, that the powerful, the quickening, and uniting presence, the vital and transforming energy of the Spirit of God or of Christ in him, was the cause of his own vitality? Nay, would he not be shocked to hear any one maintain the contrary?

Ghost has thought fit to compare this. The *union* of the members of the body with the head, is the ground of their partaking of the life of the head; it is the *union* of the branches to the stock, which is the ground of their partaking of the sap and life of the stock; it is the *relation* of the wife to the husband, that is the ground of her joint interest in his estate: they are looked upon, in several respects, as one in law. So there is a legal union between Christ and true Christians; so that (as all except Socinians allow) one, in some respects, is accepted for the other by the supreme Judge.

6. Perhaps it may be thought, that—though in the great laboratory of physical nature, in the bowels of the earth and in the surrounding atmosphere, a causal union be necessary to produce chemical effects; and that though in all works of mechanism a causal union is requisite to the existence of mechanical effects; and that, moreover, though the sun by his light and heat produces an effect upon objects by a causal union with them; yet, what shall we say of one body effecting a change of situation in another, at an immense distance? Does not the sun powerfully attract all the planets that surround him, however distant? and how can this be by causal union? This objection admits of two answers.

7. First, it has never been proved, that there is no causal union between these bodies adequate to the effect; while, on the contrary, several philosophers have at least attempted to show its existence. The solar system, for aught we know, may be perfectly mechanical, though we should never be able to perceive the intermediate parts.

8. Secondly, as the universe in general depends on the causal presence of the first cause, so must every part of it; scripture and reason assure us that IN GOD we live and move, and have our being. Therefore, whether there be any intermediate cause of gravitation or not, between the effect and the first cause, a causal union is still necessary to the effect. What difference there is, lies against the objector. For if there be no intermediate cause of gravitation, the presence, the energy, the causal union of the first cause, is proportionally the more immediate.

9. Having shewn that neither the carnal man nor the spiritual man is the immediate cause of the union subsisting between Christ and the Christian, it remains to be ascertained, what else is the cause? If it be not man, it must be the DIVINE SPIRIT, either as the Spirit of the Father or of Christ. In one view this difference is not very material, but in another it is of considerable importance. Allow it to be from the Holy Spirit, in either sense, it secures the great point of salvation by grace, in opposition to our own merit. But, as it respects the nature of Christ's mediation, and particularly his federal headship and suretyship, it is of moment to ascertain, whether he or the Father, economically, be the immediate cause of the vital union.

10. The scripture fully declares that the influence of the Spirit, on the minds of men, is from Christ. The Lord from heaven is a quickening spirit—he quickeneth whom he will—he sends the Holy Ghost—he gives repentance, or the spirit of repentance—in him was life, (without whom nothing was created,) and this life is the true light of men—he shines into the heart—his grace and strength constitute our sufficiency, &c. These and other passages innumerable show, that quickening influence proceeds from his fulness of life and grace.

11. That other passages ascribe spiritual effects to the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is of no force, except with such as deny the divine nature of Christ, who are confuted on other grounds. But, supposing his divine nature in union with humanity, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and *vice versa*. And in the divine economy of grace, Christ is the head or source of influence to the church. It is he who gives gifts to the rebellious, who endows with the spirit of life, and who bestows the living water to which divine influence is compared.

(3.) And thus it is that faith is the qualification in any person that renders it meet in the sight of God that he should be looked upon as having Christ's satisfaction and righteousness belonging to him, *viz.* because it is that in him which, *on his part*, makes up this union between him and Christ. By what has been just now observed, it is a person's being, according to scripture phrase, *in Christ*, that is the ground of having his satisfaction and merits belonging to him, and a right to the benefits procured thereby. The reason of it is plain; it is easy to see how our having Christ's

12. And how beautifully consistent must this appear when we consider, that as a covenant head he is the surety of his chosen people? The office of a surety engages to perform what is requisite in behalf of a person or persons as required by another. Thus Jesus not only brought in an everlasting righteousness in behalf of his people as their federal perfection, in lieu of those who could never attain to it by any obedience of their own; but it also belonged to his office to secure for them a voluntary, penitential, believing obedience to the equitable requisitions of the divine governor. This can be effected only by divine influence, and that influence must needs proceed from him as the immediate cause; otherwise we make the creditor and surety to be the very same. God as governor demands obedience from all the subjects of his government; and Christ as the surety of those who were given him enables them to comply with those demands, that is, to submit, to repent, to believe with the heart, to love God, and to walk with him.

13. From the premises it follows plainly, that the immediate cause of vital union is the Spirit of Christ, which he bestows in the exercise of his office as the federal head of influence, and in virtue of his suretyship for his church and people. He, as the true vine, communicates life to the branches, and as the head of his church brings dead souls to be his living members. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit, and not the cause of a spiritual existence.—Yet,

14. We maintain that faith forms a consequent union. Man being a subject of moral government, and therefore a free agent, at liberty to choose his end and means of happiness for which he is accountable; and God in infinite mercy proposing Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life; the all-sufficient and only Saviour of sinners—in whom we are required to believe and to trust with confidence, and whom we are encouraged to receive into our hearts, that he may dwell there by faith—the regenerate soul, by believing, unites itself to this object.

15. The former union is the immediate effect of sovereign favour; the latter union is the immediate effect of exercised grace; in the performance of an incumbent duty, or the discharge of moral obligation. Now since men are exhorted, warned, directed, reasoned, and expostulated with, on the ground of what they ought to do or abstain from doing, the scripture abounds with such addresses. But lest any false inferences should be drawn, derogatory from the honours of sovereign grace, we are assured that every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father of lights. When we have done all we are unprofitable servants. Work out your own salvation, says Paul, with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. No one can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him, that is, without divine influence; and whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Among many other parts of scripture where grace and obligation are strikingly intermixed, and illustrative of the preceding remarks, the reader is particularly referred to the 6th and 15th chapters of St. John's Gospel.

16. *Coroll.* The old mode, adopted by many orthodox divines, of distinguishing the vital union between Christ and his people, first, on his part, and secondly, on their part, is founded on scripture and the reason of the thing; and the former is the cause of the latter. And therefore, as the cause must ever precede the effect, the first union not only may be prior to the second, as in the case of happy infants, but also must be so in the case of adults. W.

merits and benefits belonging to us, follows from our having (if I may so speak) *Christ himself* belonging to us, or our being united to him. And if so, it must also be easy to see how, or in what manner, that in a person, which *on his part* makes up the *union* between his soul and Christ, should be the thing on the account of which God looks on it as meet that he should have Christ's merits belonging to him. It is a very different thing for God to assign to a particular person a right to Christ's merits and benefits from regard to a qualification in him in this respect, from his doing it for him out of respect to the *value* or loveliness of that qualification, or as a reward of its excellency.

As there is nobody but what will allow that there is a peculiar *relation* between Christ and his true disciples, by which they are in some sense in scripture said to be *one;* so I suppose there is nobody but what will allow, that there may be something that the true Christian does *on his part*, whereby he is *active* in coming into this relation or union; some *uniting* act, or that which is done towards this union or relation (or whatever any please to call it) *on the Christian's part.* Now faith I suppose to be this act.

I do not now pretend to define justifying faith, or to determine precisely how much is contained in it, but only to determine thus much concerning it, *viz.* That it is that by which the soul, which before was separate and alienated from Christ, unites itself to him, or ceases to be any longer in that state of alienation, and comes into that forementioned union or relation to him; or, to use the scripture phrase, it is that by which the soul comes to Christ, and *receives* him; and this is evident by the scriptures using these very expressions to signify faith. John vi. 35—39. "He that *cometh* to me, shall never hunger; and he that *believeth* on me, shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me, shall *come to* me; and him that *cometh* to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Ver. 40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth* on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."—Chap. v. 38—40——"Whom he hath sent, him ye *believe* not. Search the scriptures, for—they are they which testify of me. And ye will not *come unto me*, that ye might have life." Ver. 43, 44. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye *receive* me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will *receive*. How can ye *believe*, which receive honour one of another?"—Chap. i. 12. "But as many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." If it be said that these are obscure figures of speech, which, however they might be well understood of old among those who com-

monly used such metaphors, are with difficulty understood now: I allow, that the expressions of *receiving* Christ and *coming* to Christ, are metaphorical expressions; and if I should allow them to be obscure metaphors, yet thus much at least is certainly plain in them, *viz.* that faith is that by which those who before were separated, and at a distance from Christ, (that is to say, were not so related and united to him as his people are,) cease to be any longer at such a distance, and come into that relation and nearness; unless they are so unintelligible, that nothing at all can be understood by them.

God does not give those that believe an union with or an interest in the Saviour as a *reward* for faith, but only because faith is the soul's *active* uniting with Christ, or is itself the very act of unition, *on their part.* God sees it fit, that in order to an union being established between two intelligent active beings or persons, so as that they should be looked upon as one, there should be the mutual act of both, that each should receive the other, as actively joining themselves one to another. God, in requiring this in order to an union with Christ as one of his people, treats men as reasonable creatures, capable of act and choice; and hence sees it fit that they only who are one with Christ by their own act, should be looked upon as one *in law.* What is *real* in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is *legal;* that is, it is something really in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the ground of the suitableness of their being accounted as one by the judge. And if there be any *act* or qualification in believers of that uniting nature, that it is meet on that account the judge should look upon them and accept them as one, no wonder that upon the account of the same act or qualification, he should accept the satisfaction and merits of the one for the other, as if these were their own satisfaction and merits. This necessarily follows, or rather is implied.

And thus it is that faith justifies, or gives an interest in Christ's satisfaction and merits, and a right to the benefits procured thereby, *viz.* as it thus makes Christ and the believer *one* in the acceptance of the supreme Judge. It is by faith that we have a title to eternal life, because it is by faith that we have the Son of God, by whom life is. The apostle John in these words, 1 John v. 12. "He that hath the Son hath life," seems evidently to have respect to those words of Christ, of which he gives an account in his gospel, chap. iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." And where the scripture speaks of faith as the soul's receiving or coming to Christ, it also speaks of this receiving, coming to, or joining with Christ, as the ground of an interest in his benefits. To as many as received him, "to them gave he power" to become

the sons of God. Ye will not come unto me, "that ye might have life." And there is a wide difference between its being suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs who believe, because an interest in that satisfaction and merit is a fit *reward* of faith—or a suitable testimony of God's respect to the amiableness and excellency of that grace—and its being suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs, because Christ and they are so united, that in the eyes of the Judge they may be looked upon and taken as one.

Although, on account of faith in the believer, it is in the sight of God fit and congruous, both that he who believes should be looked upon as in Christ, and also as having an interest in his merits, in the way that has been now explained; yet it appears that this is very wide from a *merit of congruity*, or indeed any *moral* congruity at all to either*. There is a two-fold fitness to

* The term here used, "moral congruity," is not happily chosen. Indeed our author, in the next sentence, professes himself to be at a loss what terms to use which may clearly convey the necessary distinction. By "moral" congruity or fitness, he seems to mean personal perfection, or a perfection of state personally considered, without relation to a surety, or the righteousness which God has provided. But this is an acceptation of the term "moral" so unusual as to throw great perplexity into the argument. Beside, when contrasted with believing, it leads the reader to suppose that to believe is not a moral act. But the supposition that "believing with the heart unto righteousness" is not a moral act, as contradistinguished from a natural one, leads to an endless confusion of ideas. Surely, to believe God's testimony concerning his Son and his righteousness is, if any thing be, a moral act of obedience to divine authority. How then can it be called a natural fitness only, as contrasted with what is moral? Nor is the distinction at all necessary in order to avoid the apprehended consequence of assigning to faith any merit of congruity. A few observations on this intricate subject may probably assist the reader in seeking scriptural and consistent notions.

1. Justification implies a charge, a plea, and a virtual declaration of approval.

2. The charge against Adam and all his posterity is two-fold, including a breach of covenant, or a failure in federal perfection; and also disobedience in transgressing a divine rule. Those considerations are perfectly distinct in their nature. A rule may be momentarily transgressed for a long series of years, as it was by Adam, and constantly is by his rebellious descendants, but a federal failure was, from the nature of perfect righteousness, the very first act of delinquency.

3. No plea can be valid against a federal delinquency, as was the case in Adam, but a participation of a federal perfection. Nothing less can answer the charge, and nothing more is requisite. This averts condemnation, and entitles to a virtual approval in reference to that part of the charge.

4. No plea can be valid against disobedience to divine authority, or the rule of moral government, but a personal, voluntary, actual compliance with that authoritative rule of government; which we find by divine revelation to be, in reference to fallen man, submission to the righteousness of God; or, as differently expressed, believing on the Son of God, receiving him as the Lord our righteousness, &c.

5. No man has possessed a federal perfection, except by imputation, beside the first Adam while he obeyed without failure, and the second Adam when he had completed his work of humiliation. For no eminence of grace in a mere descendant of Adam could possibly attain to federal perfection, from the very nature of such perfection. Nor indeed can the perfect obedience of glorified saints rise higher than a conformity to the divine law as a rule; their federal perfection is

a state; I know not how to give them distinguishing names, otherwise than by calling the one a *moral*, and the other a *natural* fitness. A person has a moral fitness for a state, when his moral excellency commends him to it, or when his being put into such a good state is but a suitable testimony of regard to the moral ex-

still derived from their union to Christ, and a consequent imputation, which implies a virtual approval. Hence,

6. The federal perfection of Messiah is the proper and sole ground of an actual interest in reconciliation and justification. In other words, the righteousness of Christ, his perfect obedience unto death as our substitute, is that alone on account of which we can stand before God with acceptance, in reference to the charge of a federal failure in Adam.

7. An actual interest in this federal perfection is obtained only by a vital or an effectual union to the Lord our righteousness. This is plain from scripture, and is perfectly rational. It is compared to the union of a vine and its branches, the head and members of the human body, &c. That a participation of nature between Christ and us, or an effectual union, is requisite for a ground of imputation, is evident, not only from scriptural comparisons, and the rational consistence of such an idea, but also from the fact of the Saviour's incarnation. Without this union to us, our sin could not have been imputed to him; and without a vital union, his righteousness could not be imputed to us. This is fairly and fully implied in many parts of scripture, as might be shewn if necessary. From hence it is plain, that union is the indispensible ground of imputation.

8. Whoever is the subject of a vital union to Christ, is in a justified state, as partaker of a federal perfection, prior to the performance of any moral duty whatever. But in order to explain and prove this, it is requisite to attend to the following particulars:

9. Union to Christ is of two kinds, on his part by his Spirit; and on our part by Faith, as explained in a preceding note. In the former, we are passive; and in the latter, we are active. In the one, he acts as a sovereign dispenser of benefits; in the other, we act as accountable creatures.

10. By the order both of nature and of time, the union begins with him, who is a quickening spirit; and that of faith is consequent upon the other, and is the proper effect of it.

11. By his uniting act, which may be termed effectual calling, the enmity of sin is destroyed in the soul, and the Spirit of Christ is imparted, which as occasion offers, will manifest itself as the spirit of faith, of love, &c. Hence,

12. To the soul thus in Christ, whether infant or adult, there is no condemnation arising from federal delinquency; for this charge is answered by the union on his part; and righteousness is imputed.

13. From the premises it follows, that the generally received theological maxim is perfectly just and plain, viz. that justification and regeneration are simultaneous. Union is the immediate cause of both; and because the one is a relative and the other a vital effect, there is no interference as to the order of time. Thus an union of a tree and a branch by ingrafture, is attended with two simultaneous effects, the one relative and the other vital; it is related to the tree as a branch, and at the same time partakes of the vital sap. The union, however, must precede both, as to nature and time.

14. But where two effects are both real, as distinguished from relative, the one must precede the other, both as to nature and time. Thus union precedes vitality, and this of necessity must precede vital acts; and regeneration, as the act of the Spirit of Christ, must necessarily precede believing, which is one mode by which a vital principle operates. For to suppose that the operation produces, or is prior to the principle, either in nature or in time, is a direct contradiction.

15. If the preceding steps of these remarks be thoroughly weighed, it will be found, that justification, according to scripture and just reasoning upon it, has for its foundation the federal perfection of Messiah, and takes place as the immediate result of union to him.

16. But since this union is two-fold, the one as the effect of the other, that is,

cellency, or value, or amiableness of any of his qualifications or acts. A person has a natural fitness for a state, when it appears meet and condecent that he should be in such a state or circumstances, only from the natural concord or agreeableness there is between such qualifications and such circumstances; not because the qualifications are lovely or unlovely, but only because the

union by faith is the effect of union by the Spirit of Christ, and these, cause and effect, cannot possibly be simultaneous, there must necessarily be a two-fold justification as the result of the corresponding unions. Though in that union which is first in the order of nature and of time, the person, whether infant or adult, is passive; the result, however, is the imputation of righteousness, which is Messiah's federal perfection, and which entitles to life eternal. And by that union which is the effect of the other, and consequently posterior to it in the order both of nature and of time (and of which infants cannot be partakers) that is, by the union effected by believing, the result is the imputation of the same righteousness in circumstances totally different.

17. These two different circumstances, clearly perceived, will develope the seeming difficulty. In the first, the person, whether infant or adult, is the passive possessor of decreed benefits, union, righteousness and life; in the second circumstance, the adult person, as a free and accountable agent, is required to determine for himself on what to found his plea of acceptance with God. If he found his plea on his own obedience, past or intended, whether moral, ceremonial, or both; he shews at once both ignorance and rebellion. Ignorance, that he supposes it even possible for him, by his own obedience, to attain to that federal perfection which is justly required by the righteous Governor; and also in that he does not perceive the love and wisdom, the superabounding grace and wonderful mercy of God as a sovereign Benefactor in providing the needful remedy. Rebellion, in that he rejects the counsel of God, and resists, by obstinate unbelief, the divine authority requiring submission to this righteousness as the way to favour and life. Hence,

18. As all reasonings, expostulations, threats, promises and encouragements; all testimonies, declarations, appeals, inducements, and sanctions, are addressed to men as moral agents, with whom, in the business of accountability, it rests, what mode they will adopt for obtaining acceptance with God—whether by doing the work themselves, or by believing his testimony and receiving his gift—it fully accounts for justification by faith being the great point argued in the apostolic writings.

19. And it further appears, that justification by faith alone should be strenuously urged by all gospel ministers, while they have to do continually with persons whose inquiry is, "What shall we do to be saved?" To such as thus inquire after the way of salvation, who seek acceptance with God, who are about to choose for themselves "the way they will take," what answer can be given, in effect, but what is contained in the apostle's words? "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The above statement not only agrees with these words, but also, as I humbly conceive, explains their import; and the embarrassment respecting the office and influence of faith in justification is removed, without expunging faith, or the act of believing, from the class of moral duties.

20. It may be objected, If there be any justification before believing, then an unbeliever may be justified; whereas the scripture saith, "He that believeth not is condemned already." This objection arises from a mistaken notion of the true meaning of such passages of scripture. Condemnation, in the real import of scripture, is levelled against the rejecters of Christ, or of the divine testimony, and these only, considered as free agents in seeking acceptance with God and final happiness. These, not believing in Christ, while prevailingly devoted to Moses or Mahomet, moral obedience or ceremonies, or indeed any other object whatever, reject in fact the testimony of God and his righteousness, and expose themselves to a double condemnation. They are condemned as being destitute of a perfect righteousness, and also for their actual disobedience to the divine authority. The sentence of the law is against them, both as a covenant and as a rule; and the gospel which they reject will be a witness to prove the wickedness of their heart. But this can

qualifications and the circumstances are like one another, or do in their nature suit and agree or unite one to another. And it is on this latter account only that God looks on it fit by a natural fitness, that he whose heart sincerely unites itself to Christ as his Saviour, should be looked upon as united to that Saviour, and so having an interest in him; and not from any moral fitness there

never take place in one who is vitally united to Christ. All allow that infants not believing are not to be ranked with unbelievers. To them no testimony is proposed, and therefore no testimony is rejected by them. Nor does any adult united to Christ reject the divine testimony, even before he believes. Let but the object of faith be presented to him, and his vital union secures the exercise of the living principle towards the proposed object in proportion as the terms are understood. A testimony not presented, or one presented in an unknown tongue, cannot be believed, notwithstanding the principle of faith. The existence of a principle does not necessarily imply its exercise, whether it be sense, reason or faith. Men are not necessarily conversant with the objects of sense, because they possess the senses requisite for these purposes; nor are they always exercising the powers of the mind, however essential these powers are to human nature. In like manner, not exercising faith is a very different thing from not possessing the principle. A vital union and the spirit of faith are inseparably and essentially connected; but a vital union and believing are connected *secundum quid* in certain circumstances. Without the circumstances of adult age, or a capacity of understanding, believing is impracticable. But how absurd would it be to say, that a sinner cannot be justified because he has not arrived at a certain advanced portion of understanding, or has not learned some language; as if a title to heaven depended on age, or knowing a language! And equally absurd is it to suppose that Christ cannot effect a vital union because the sinner's voluntary consent to it is wanting; as if God's high sovereignty were bound by the human will! That God requires the sinner's consent, as a matter of obligation, is a solemn fact; but God has not laid himself under any obligation that he will never unite a soul to Christ for justification of life but by the sinner's previous consent. He has declared, however, that the continued unbeliever, who is properly a wilful rejecter of Christ and his righteousness, shall be condemned. Hence it is evident, that to make believing essential to a vital union, on the part of Christ, and to make the exercise of faith on a divine testimony essential to its existence, are erroneous conclusions, derogatory to gospel grace, and founded on wrong notions of moral government.

21. To make this, if possible, still more plain, the gospel finds men, as apostatized with Adam, in a state of condemnation; infants and adults alike are under the condemnatory sentence which is the result of a breach of covenant. This evil can be removed, and a restoration to favour be effected, only by an act of sovereign grace, whereby Christ becomes united vitally to the soul. Without this vital union, there is, there can be no faith. This being the case, a vital union is formed before faith can have any ground of existence; and consequently a justification which is a necessary result of this union takes place. For to him who is thus in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation; but he is passed from death unto life, as an object of mere grace and mercy. In this respect, an adult and an infant are perfectly on a par, while justified and regenerated for the kingdom of God. But God, in the character of a moral Governor, has a further claim on every free agent; he exhibits to the view, and solicits, yea demands a voluntary compliance with the plan of mercy through the blessed Redeemer, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. The regenerate person that is capable of acting for himself, as the subject of commands and invitations, complies; he becomes an active recipient of the appointed righteousness, which he now pleads in opposition to all charges presented against him. By faith or believing God's testimony, he makes his appeal, and by faith alone he is justified. An investigation of the *rationale* of Christian doctrines is not necessary for popular use, but may be peculiarly useful as a guard against inconsistencies, and a means of strengthening our attachment to those doctrines. W.

is between the excellency of such a qualification as faith, and such a glorious blessedness as the having an interest in Christ. God's bestowing Christ and his benefits on a soul in consequence of faith, out of regard only to the natural concord there is between such a qualification of a soul, and such an union with Christ, and interest in him, makes the case very widely different from what it would be, if he bestowed this from regard to any moral suitableness. For, in the former case, it is only from God's love of order that he bestows these things on the account of faith: in the latter, God doth it out of love to the grace of faith itself.—God will neither look on Christ's merits as ours, nor adjudge his benefits to us, till we be in Christ; nor will he look upon us as being in him, without an active unition of our hearts and souls to him; because he is a wise being, and delights in order and not in confusion, and that things should be together or asunder according to their nature; and his making such a constitution is a testimony of his love of order*. Whereas if it were out of regard to any moral fitness or suitableness between faith and such blessedness, it would be a testimony of his love to the act or qualification itself. The one supposes this divine constitution to be a manifestation of God's regard to the beauty of the act of faith: the other only supposes it to be a manifestation of his regard to the beauty of that order that there is in uniting those things that have a natural agreement and congruity, and unition of the one with the other. Indeed a moral suitableness or fitness to a state includes a natural; for, if there be a moral suitableness that a person should be in such a state, there is also a natural suitableness; but such a natural suitableness as I have described, by no means necessarily includes a moral.

This is plainly what our divines intend when they say, that faith does not justify as a *work*, or a righteousness, *viz.* that it does not justify as a part of our moral goodness or excellency, or that it does not justify as man was to have been justified by the covenant of works, which was, to have a title to eternal life given him of God, in testimony of his pleasedness with his works, or his regard to the inherent excellency and beauty of his obedience. And this is certainly what the apostle Paul means, when he so much insists

* This order, however, is a law to us, and compliance with it necessarily imports moral obedience; though the object received is the obedience of another. No one has room to expect success in his endeavours, but by complying with the divine requisition; and that requisition is, that we submit to the perfection of Messiah. And an act of submission to the righteousness of faith may well be an act of moral excellence, though that excellence has nothing meritorious on account of which a perfect righteousness should be imputed. A thing may have moral goodness without moral perfection. But in order to deny to faith the latter, it is not necessary to deprive it of the former. If we consistently maintain, that the moral excellence of faith constitutes no part of our justifying righteousness, it is all that the argument requires, in order to establish the conclusion intended. W.

upon it, that we are not justified by works, *viz.* that we are not justified by them as good works, or by any goodness, value, or excellency of our works. For the proof of this I shall at present mention but one thing, and that is, the apostle from time to time speaking of our not being justified by works, as the thing that excludes all boasting, Eph. ii. 9. Rom. iii. 27. and chap. iv. 2. Now which way do works give occasion for boasting, but as good? What do men use to boast of, but of something they suppose good or excellent? And on what account do they boast of any thing, but for the supposed excellency that is in it?

From these things we may learn in what manner faith is the only condition of justification and salvation. For though it be not the only condition, so as alone truly to have the place of a condition in an hypothetical proposition, in which justification and salvation are the consequent, yet it is the condition of justification in a manner peculiar to it, and so that nothing else has a parallel influence with it; because faith includes the whole act of unition to Christ as a Saviour. The entire active uniting of the soul, or the whole of what is called coming to Christ, and receiving of him, is called faith in scripture; and however other things may be no less excellent than faith, yet it is not the nature of any other graces or virtues directly to close with Christ as a mediator, any further than they enter into the constitution of justifying faith, and do belong to its nature.

Thus I have explained my meaning, in asserting it as a doctrine of the gospel, that we are justified by *faith only*, without any manner of goodness of our own.

I now proceed,

II. To the proof of it; which I shall endeavour to produce in the following arguments.

First, Such is our case, and the state of things, that neither faith, nor any other qualifications, or act or course of acts, does or can render it suitable that a person should have an interest in the Saviour, and so a title to his benefits, on account of an excellency therein, or any other way, than as something in him may unite him to the Saviour. It is not suitable that God should give fallen man an interest in Christ and his merits, as a testimony of his respect to any thing whatsoever as a loveliness in him; and that because it is not meet, till a sinner is actually justified, that any thing in him should be accepted of God, as any excellency or amiableness of his person; or that God, by any act, should in any manner or degree testify any pleasedness with him, or favour towards him, on the account of any thing inherent in him; and that for two reasons:

1. The nature of things will not admit of it. And this appears from the infinite guilt that the sinner till justified is under; which

arises from the infinite evil or heinousness of sin. But because this is what some deny, I would therefore first establish that point, and shew that sin is a thing that is indeed properly of infinite heinousness; and then shew the consequence, that it cannot be suitable, till the sinner is actually justified, that God should by any act testify pleasedness with or acceptance of any excellency or amiableness of his person.

That the evil and demerit of sin is infinitely great, is most demonstrably evident, because what the evil or iniquity of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, or doing what we should not do; and therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, by so much the greater is the iniquity of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love or honour any being is great in proportion to the greatness or excellency of that being, or his worthiness to be loved and honoured. We are under greater obligations to love a more lovely being than a less lovely; and if a being be infinitely excellent and lovely, our obligations to love him are therein infinitely great. The matter is so plain, it seems needless to say much about it.

Some have argued exceeding strangely against the infinite evil of sin, from its being committed against an infinite object, that then it may as well be argued, that there is also an infinite value or worthiness in holiness and love to God, because that also has an infinite object; whereas the argument, from parity of reason, will carry it in the reverse. The sin of the creature against God is ill deserving in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature; the greatness of the object, and the meanness of the subject, aggravates it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the creature to God; it is worthless (and not worthy) in proportion to the meanness of the subject. So much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The unworthiness of sin or opposition to God rises and is great in proportion to the dignity of the object and inferiority of the subject; but on the contrary, the value of respect rises in proportion to the value of the subject; and that for this plain reason, *viz.* that the evil of disrespect is in proportion to the obligation that lies upon the subject to the object; which obligation is most evidently increased by the excellency and superiority of the object. But on the contrary, the worthiness of respect to a being is in proportion to the obligation that lies on him who is the object, (or rather the reason he has) to regard the subject, which certainly is in proportion to the subject's value or excellency. Sin or disrespect is evil or heinous in proportion to the degree of what it denies in the object, and as it were takes from it, *viz.* its excellency and worthiness of respect; on the contrary, re-

spect is valuable in proportion to the value of what is given to the object in that respect, which undoubtedly (other things being equal) is great in proportion to the subject's value, or worthiness of regard; because the subject in giving his respect, can give no more than himself; so far as he gives his respect, he gives himself to the object; and therefore his gift is of greater or lesser value in proportion to the value of himself.

Hence, (by the way,) the love, honour, and obedience of Christ towards God, has infinite value, from the excellency and dignity of the person in whom these qualifications were inherent; and the reason why we needed a person of infinite dignity to obey for us, was because of our infinite comparative meanness, who had disobeyed, whereby our disobedience was infinitely aggravated. We needed one, the worthiness of whose obedience might be answerable to the unworthiness of our disobedience; and therefore needed one who was as great and worthy as we were unworthy.

Another objection (that perhaps may be thought hardly worth mentioning) is, that to suppose sin to be infinitely heinous, is to make all sins equally heinous; for how can any sin be more than infinitely heinous? But all that can be argued hence is, that no sin can be greater with respect to that aggravation, the worthiness of the object against whom it is committed. One sin cannot be more aggravated than another in *that* respect, because the aggravation of every sin is infinite; but that does not hinder, that some sins may be more heinous than others in *other* respects; as if we should suppose a cylinder infinitely long, cannot be greater in that respect, *viz.* with respect to the length of it; but yet it may be doubled and trebled, and make a thousand-fold more, by the increase of other dimensions. Of sins that are all infinitely heinous, some may be more heinous than others; as well as of divers punishments that are all infinitely dreadful calamities, or all of them infinitely exceeding all finite calamities, so that there is no finite calamity, however great, but what is infinitely less dreadful, or more eligible than any of them, yet some of them may be a thousand times more dreadful than others. A punishment may be infinitely dreadful by reason of the infinite duration of it; and therefore cannot be greater with respect to *that* aggravation of it; *viz.* its length of continuance, but yet may be vastly more terrible on other accounts.

Having thus, as I imagine, made it clear, that all sin is infinitely heinous, and consequently that the sinner, before he is justified, is under infinite guilt in God's sight; it now remains that I shew the consequence, or how it follows from hence, that it is not suitable that God should give the sinner an interest in Christ's merits, and so a title to his benefits, from regard to any qualification, or act, or course of acts in him, on the account of any excellency or

goodness whatsoever therein, but only as uniting to Christ; or (which fully implies it) that it is not suitable that God, by any act, should, in any manner or degree, testify any acceptance of, or pleasedness with any thing, as any virtue, or excellency, or any part of loveliness, or valuableness in his person, until he is actually already interested in Christ's merits. From the premises it follows, that before the sinner is already interested in Christ, and justified, it is impossible God should have any acceptance of, or pleasedness with the person of the sinner, as in any degree lovely in his sight, or indeed less the object of his displeasure and wrath. For, by the supposition, the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in the sight of God; for guilt is not removed but by pardon; but to suppose the sinner already pardoned, is to suppose him already justified; which is contrary to the supposition. But if the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in God's sight, that is the same thing as still to be beheld of God as infinitely the object of his displeasure and wrath, or infinitely hateful in his eyes; and if so, where is any room for any thing in him, to be accepted as some valuableness or acceptableness of him in God's sight, or for any act of favour of any kind towards him, or any gift whatsoever to him, in testimony of God's respect to and acceptance of something of him lovely and pleasing? If we should suppose that a sinner could have faith, or some other grace in his heart, and yet remain separate from Christ, and that he is not looked upon as being in Christ, or having any relation to him, it would not be meet that such true grace should be accepted of God as any loveliness of his person in the sight of God. If it should be accepted as the loveliness of the person, that would be to accept the person as in some degree lovely to God; but this cannot be consistent with his still remaining under infinite guilt, or infinite unworthiness in God's sight, which that goodness has no worthiness to balance.—While God beholds the man as separate from Christ, he must behold him as he is in himself; and so his goodness cannot be beheld by God, but as taken with his guilt and hatefulness, and as put in the scales with it; and so his goodness is nothing: because there is a finite on the balance against an infinite whose proportion to it is nothing. In such a case, if the man be looked on as he is in himself, the excess of the weight in one scale above another, must be looked upon as the quality of the man. These contraries being beheld together, one takes from another, as one number is subtracted from another; and the man must be looked upon in God's sight according to the remainder. For here, by the supposition, all acts of grace or favour, in not imputing the guilt as it is, are excluded, because that supposes a degree of pardon, and that supposes justification, which is contrary to what is supposed, *viz.* that the sinner is not already justified; and therefore things must

be taken strictly as they are; and so the man is still infinitely unworthy and hateful in God's sight, as he was before, without diminution, because his goodness bears no proportion to his unworthiness, and therefore when taken together is nothing.

Hence may be more clearly seen the force of that expression in the text, of believing on him that *justifieth the ungodly*; for though there is indeed something in man that is really and spiritually good, prior to justification, yet there is nothing that is accepted as any godliness or excellency of the person, till after justification. Goodness or loveliness of the person in the acceptance of God, in any degree, is not to be considered as prior but posterior in the order and method of God's proceeding in this affair. Though a respect to the natural suitableness between such a qualification, and such a state, does go before justification, yet the acceptance even of faith as any goodness or loveliness of the believer, follows justification. The goodness is on the forementioned account justly looked upon as nothing, until the man is justified: And therefore the man is respected in justification, as in himself altogether hateful. Thus the nature of things will not admit of a man having an interest given him in the merits or benefits of a Saviour, on the account of any thing as a righteousness, or a virtue, or excellency in him.

2. A divine constitution antecedent to that which establishes justification by a Saviour, (and indeed to any need of a Saviour,) stands in the way of it, *viz.* that original constitution or law which man was put under; by which constitution or law the sinner is condemned, because he is a violator of that law; and stands condemned, till he has actually an interest in the Saviour, through whom he is set at liberty from that condemnation. But to suppose that God gives a man an interest in Christ in *reward* for his righteousness or virtue, is inconsistent with his still remaining under condemnation till he has an interest in Christ; because it supposes, that the sinner's virtue is accepted, and he accepted for it, before he has an interest in Christ; inasmuch as an interest in Christ is given as a reward of his virtue. But the virtue must first be accepted, before it is rewarded, and the man must first be accepted for his virtue before he is rewarded for it with so great and glorious a reward; for the very notion of a reward, is some good bestowed in testimony of respect to and acceptance of virtue in the person rewarded. It does not consist with the honour of the majesty of the King of heaven and earth, to accept of any thing from a condemned malefactor, condemned by the justice of his own holy law, till that condemnation be removed. And then such acceptance is inconsistent with, and contradictory to such remaining condemnation; for the law condemns him that violates it, to be totally rejected and cast off by God. But how can a

man continue under this condemnation, *i. e.* continue utterly rejected and cast off by God, and yet his righteousness or virtue be accepted, and he himself accepted on the account of it, so as to have so glorious a reward as an interest in Christ bestowed as a testimony of that acceptance?

I know that the answer will be, that we now are not subject to that constitution which mankind were at first put under; but that God, in mercy to mankind, has abolished that rigorous constitution, and put us under a new law, and introduced a more mild constitution; and that the constitution or law itself not remaining, there is no need of supposing that the condemnation of it remains, to stand in the way of the acceptance of our virtue. And indeed there is no other way of avoiding this difficulty. The condemnation of the law must stand in force against a man, till he is actually interested in the Saviour who has satisfied and answered the law, so as effectually to prevent any acceptance of his virtue, either before, or in order to such an interest, unless the law or constitution itself be abolished. But the scheme of those modern divines by whom this is maintained, seems to contain a great deal of absurdity and self-contradiction: they hold, that the old law given to Adam, which requires perfect obedience, is entirely repealed, and that instead of it we are put under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect sincere obedience, in compliance with our poor, infirm, impotent circumstances since the fall, whereby we are unable to perform that perfect obedience that was required by the first law; for they strenuously maintain, that it would be unjust in God to require any thing of us that is beyond our present power and ability to perform; and yet they hold, that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our obedience, that so our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of perfect. Now, how can these things hang together? I would ask, What law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of? If they are a breach of no law, then they are not sins; and if they be not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? But if they are sins, and so the breach of some law, what law is it? They cannot be a breach of their new law, for that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections; and they cannot be a breach of the old law, for that they say is entirely abolished, and we never were under it; and we cannot break a law that we never were under. They say it would not be just in God to exact of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just in God to require more of us than we can perform in our present state, and to punish us for failing of it; and therefore by their own scheme, the imperfections of our obedience do not deserve to be punished. What need therefore of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? What need of Christ's suffering to satisfy for

that which is no fault, and in its own nature deserves no suffering? What need of Christ's dying to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when according to their scheme it would be unjust in itself that any other obedience than imperfect should be required? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting such an obedience, as it would in itself be unjust in him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying to persuade God not to do unjustly? If it be said that Christ died to satisfy that law for us, that so we might not be under that law, but might be delivered from it, that so there might be room for us to be under a more mild law, still I would inquire, What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that (according to their scheme) it would in itself be unjust that we should be under, because in our present state we are not able to keep it? What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that it would be unjust that we should be under, whether Christ died or no?

Thus far I have argued principally from reason, and the nature of things:—I proceed now to the

Second argument, which is, That this is a doctrine which the holy scriptures, the revelation that God has given us of his mind and will—by which alone we can never come to know how those who have offended God can come to be accepted of him, and justified in his sight—is exceeding full. The apostle Paul is abundant in teaching, that "we are justified by faith alone, without the works of the law." There is no one doctrine that he insists so much upon, and that he handles with so much distinctness, explaining, giving reasons, and answering objections.

Here it is not denied by any, that the apostle does assert, that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law, because the words are express; but only it is said, that we take his words wrong, and understand that by them that never entered into his heart, in that when he excludes the works of the law, we understand him of the whole law of God, or the rule which he has given to mankind to walk by; whereas all that he intends is the ceremonial law.

Some that oppose this doctrine indeed say, that the apostle sometimes means that it is by faith, *i. e.* a hearty embracing the gospel in its first act only, or without any preceding holy life, that persons are admitted into a justified state; but, say they, it is by a persevering obedience that they are continued in a justified state, and it is by this that they are finally justified. But this is the same thing as to say, that a man on his first embracing the gospel is conditionally justified and pardoned. To pardon sin, is to free the sinner from the punishment of it, or from that eternal misery that is due to it; and therefore if a person is pardoned, or

freed from this misery, on his first embracing the gospel, and yet not finally freed, but his actual freedom still depends on some condition yet to be performed, it is inconceivable how he can be pardoned otherwise than conditionally; that is, he is not properly actually pardoned, and freed from punishment, but only he has God's promise that he shall be pardoned on future conditions.—God promises him, that now, if he perseveres in obedience, he shall be finally pardoned, or actually freed from hell; which is to make just nothing at all of the apostle's great doctrine of justification by faith alone. Such a conditional pardon is no pardon or justification at all, any more than all mankind have, whether they embrace the gospel or no; for they all have a promise of final justification on conditions of future sincere obedience, as much as he that embraces the gospel. But not to dispute about this, we will suppose that there may be something or other at the sinner's first embracing the gospel, that may properly be called justification or pardon, and yet that final justification, or real freedom from the punishment of sin, is still suspended on conditions hitherto unfulfilled; yet they who hold that sinners are thus justified on embracing the gospel, suppose that they are justified by this, no otherwise than as it is a leading act of obedience, or at least as virtue and moral goodness in them, and therefore would be excluded by the apostle as much as any other virtue or obedience, if it be allowed that he means the moral law, when he excludes works of the law. And therefore, if that point be yielded, that the apostle means the moral, and not only the ceremonial law, their whole scheme falls to the ground.

And because the issue of the whole argument from those texts in St. Paul's epistles depends on the determination of this point, I would be particular in the discussion of it.

Some of our opponents in this doctrine of justification, when they deny, that by the law the apostle means the moral law, or the whole rule of life which God has given to mankind, seem to choose to express themselves thus, that the apostle only intends the Mosaic dispensation. But this comes to just the same thing as if they said, that the apostle only means to exclude the works of the ceremonial law; for when they say that it is intended only that we are not justified by the works of the Mosaic dispensation, if they mean any thing by it, it must be, that we are not justified by attending and observing what is Mosaic in that dispensation, or by what was peculiar to it, and wherein it differed from the Christian dispensation; which is the same as that which is ceremonial and positive, and not moral, in that administration. So that this is what I have to disprove, *viz.* that the apostle, when he speaks of works of the law in this affair, means only works of the cere-

monial law, or those observances that were peculiar to the Mosaic administration.

And here it must be noted, that nobody controverts it with them, whether the works of the ceremonial law be not included, or whether the apostle does not particularly argue against justification by circumcision, and other ceremonial observances; but all in question is, whether, when he denies justification by works of the law, he is to be understood only of the ceremonial law, or whether the moral law be not also implied and intended: and therefore those arguments which are brought to prove that the apostle meant the ceremonial law, are nothing to the purpose, unless they prove that the apostle meant those *only*.

What is much insisted on is, that it was the judaizing Christians being so fond of circumcision, and other ceremonies of the law, and depending so much on them, which was the very occasion of the apostle's writing as he does against justification by the works of the law. But supposing it were so, that their trusting in works of the ceremonial law were the sole *occasion* of the apostle's writing, (which yet there is no reason to allow, as may appear afterwards;) if their trusting in a particular work, as a work of righteousness, was all that gave occasion to the apostle to write, how does is follow that therefore the apostle did not upon that occasion write against trusting in *all works* of righteousness whatsoever? Where is the absurdity of supposing that the apostle might take occasion, from his observing some to trust in a certain work as a work of righteousness, to write to them against persons trusting in any works of righteousness at all, and that it was a very proper occasion too? Yea, it would have been unavoidable for the apostle to have argued against trusting in a particular work, in the quality of a work of righteousness, which quality was general, but he must therein argue against trusting in works of righteousness in general. Supposing it had been some other particular sort of works that was the occasion of the apostle's writing, as for instance, works of charity, and the apostle should hence take occasion to write to them not to trust in their works, could the apostle by that be understood of no other works besides works of charity? Would it have been absurd to understand him as writing against trusting in any work at all, because it was their trusting to a particular work that gave occasion to his writing?

Another thing alleged, as an evidence that the apostle means the ceremonial law—when he says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law—is, that he uses this argument to prove it, *viz.* that the law he speaks of was given so long after the covenant with Abraham, in Gal. iii. 17. "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul." But, say

they, it was only the Mosaic administration, and not the covenant of works, that was given so long after. But the apostle's argument seems manifestly to be mistaken by them. The apostle does not speak of a law that began to exist four hundred and thirty years after; if he did, there would be some force in their objection; but he has respect to a certain solemn transaction, well known among the Jews by the phrase, "the giving of the law," which was at Mount Sinai, (Exod. xix. xx.) consisting especially in God's giving the ten commandments (which is the moral law) with a terrible voice, which law he afterwards gave in tables of stone. This transaction the Jews in the apostle's time misinterpreted; they looked upon it as God's establishing that law as a rule of justification. Against this conceit of theirs the apostle brings this invincible argument, *viz.* that God would never go about to disannul his covenant with Abraham, which was plainly a covenant of grace, by a transaction with his posterity, that was so long after it, and was plainly built upon it. He would not overthrow a covenant of grace that he had long before established with Abraham, for him and his seed, (which is often mentioned as the ground of God's making them his people,) by now establishing a covenant of works with them at Mount Sinai, as the Jews and judaizing Christians supposed.

But that the apostle does not mean only works of the ceremonial law, when he excludes works of the law in justification, but also of the moral law, and all works of obedience, virtue, and righteousness whatsoever, may appear by the following things.

1. The apostle does not only say, that we are not justified by the works of the law, but that we are not justified by *works*, using a general term; as in our text, *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth*, &c.; and in the 6th verse, "God imputeth righteousness without works;" and chap. xi. 6. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." So, Eph. ii. 8, 9.—"For by grace are ye saved through faith,——not of works;" by which, there is no reason in the world to understand the apostle of any other than works in general, as correlates of a reward, or good works, or works of virtue and righteousness. When the apostle says, we are justified or saved not by works, without any such term annexed, as the law, or any other addition, to limit the expression, what warrant have any to confine it to works of a particular law or institution, excluding others? Are not observances of other divine laws works, as well as of that? It seems to be allowed by the divines in the Arminian scheme, in their interpretation of several of those texts where the apostle only mentions works, without any addition, that he means our own good works

in general; but then, they say, he only means to exclude any proper merit in those works. But to say the apostle means one thing when he says, we are not justified by works, and another when he says, we are not justified by the works of the law, when we find the expressions mixed and used in the same discourse, and when the apostle is evidently upon the same argument, is very unreasonable; it is to dodge and fly from scripture, rather than to open and yield ourselves to its teachings.

2. In the third chapter of Romans, our having been guilty of breaches of the moral law, is an argument that the apostle uses, why we cannot be justified by the works of the law. Beginning with the 9th verse, he proves out of the Old Testament, that all are under sin: "There is none righteous, no, not one: Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues have they used deceit: their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; and their feet swift to shed blood." And so he goes on, mentioning only those things that are breaches of the moral law; and then when he has done, his conclusion is in the 19th and 20th verses, "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight." This is most evidently his argument, because all had sinned, (as it was said in the 9th verse,) and been guilty of those breaches of the moral law that he had mentioned, (and it is repeated over again, verse 23.) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" therefore none at all can be justified by the deeds of the law. Now if the apostle meant only, that we are not justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law, what kind of arguing would that be: "Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood?" therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the Mosaic administration. They are guilty of the breaches of the moral law; and therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law! Doubtless, the apostle's argument is, that the very same law they have broken, can never justify them as observers of it, because every law necessarily condemns its violators. And therefore our breaches of the moral law argue no more, than that we cannot be justified by that law we have broken.

And it may be noted, that the apostle's argument here is the same that I have already used, *viz.* that as we are in ourselves, and out of Christ, we are under the condemnation of that original law or constitution that God established with mankind; and therefore it is no way fit that any thing we do, any virtue or obedience of ours, should be accepted, or we accepted on the account of it.

3. The apostle, in all the preceding part of this epistle, wherever he has the phrase, *the law*, evidently intends the moral law principally. As in the 12th verse of the foregoing chapter: "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law." It is evidently the written moral law the apostle means, by the next verse but one: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law;" that is, the moral law that the Gentiles have by nature. And so the next verse, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts." It is the moral law, and not the ceremonial, that is written in the hearts of those who are destitute of divine revelation. And so in the 18th verse, "Thou approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law." It is the moral law that shews us the nature of things, and teaches us what is excellent; 20th verse, "Thou hast a form of knowledge and truth in the law." It is the moral law, as is evident by what follows, verse 22, 23. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God?" Adultery, idolatry, and sacrilege, surely are the breaking of the moral, and not the ceremonial law. So in the 27th verse, "And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" *i. e.* the Gentiles, that you despise because uncircumcised, if they live moral and holy lives, in obedience to the moral law, shall condemn you, though circumcised. And so there is not one place in all the preceding part of the epistle, where the apostle speaks of the law, but that he most apparently intends principally the moral law; and yet when the apostle, in continuance of the same discourse, comes to tell us, that we cannot be justified by the works of the law, then they will needs have it, that he means only the ceremonial law. Yea, though all this discourse about the moral law, shewing how the Jews as well as Gentiles have violated it, is evidently preparatory and introductory to that doctrine, chap. iii. 20. "That no flesh," that is, none of mankind, neither Jews nor Gentiles, "can be justified by the works of the law."

4. It is evident that when the apostle says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law, he means the moral as well as ceremonial law, by his giving this reason for it, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," as Rom. iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now that law by which we come to the knowledge of sin, is the moral law chiefly and primarily. If this argument of the apostle be good, "that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, because it is by the law that we come to

the knowledge of sin;" then it proves that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law, nor by the precepts of Christianity; for by them is the knowledge of sin. If the reason be good, then where the reason holds, the truth holds. It is a miserable shift, and a violent force put upon the words, to say that the meaning is, that by the law of circumcision is the knowledge of sin, because circumcision, signifying the taking away of sin, puts men in mind of sin. The plain meaning of the apostle is, that as the law most strictly forbids sin, it tends to convince us of sin, and bring our own consciences to condemn us, instead of justifying of us; that the use of it is to declare to us our own guilt and unworthiness, which is the reverse of justifying and approving of us as virtuous or worthy. This is the apostle's meaning, if we will allow him to be his own expositor; for he himself, in this very epistle, explains to us how it is that by the law we have the knowledge of sin, and that it is by the law's forbidding sin, chap. vii. 7. "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." There the apostle determines two things; first, That the way in which "by the law is the knowledge of sin," is by the law's forbidding sin: And secondly, which is more directly still to the purpose, he determines that it is the moral law by which we come to the knowledge of sin; "for," says he, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." Now it is the moral, and not the ceremonial law, that says, "thou shalt not covet." Therefore, when the apostle argues, that by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified, because by the law is the knowledge of sin, his argument proves, (unless he was mistaken as to the force of his argument,) that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law.

5. It is evident that the apostle does not mean only the ceremonial law, because he gives this reason why we have righteousness, and a title to the privilege of God's children, not by the law, but by faith, that the law worketh wrath." Rom. iv. 13—16. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." Now the way in which the law works wrath, by the apostle's own account, in the reason he himself annexes, is by forbidding sin, and aggravating the guilt of the transgression; "for," says he, "where no law is, there is no transgression;" and so, chap. vii. 13. "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." If, therefore, this reason of the apostle be good, it is

much stronger against justification by the moral law than the ceremonial law; for it is by transgressions of the moral law chiefly that there comes wrath; for they are most strictly forbidden, and most terribly threatened.

6. It is evident that when the apostle says, we are not justified by the works of the law, that he excludes all our own virtue, goodness, or excellency, by that reason he gives for it, *viz.* "That boasting might be excluded." Rom. iii. 26—28. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Eph. ii. 8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Now what are men wont to boast of, but what they esteem their own goodness or excellency? If we are not justified by works of the ceremonial law, yet how does that exclude boasting, as long as we are justified by our own excellency or virtue and goodness of our own, or works of righteousness which we have done?

But it is said, that boasting is excluded, as circumcision was excluded, which was what the Jews especially used to glory in, and value themselves upon, above other nations.

To this I answer, that the Jews were not only used to boast of circumcision, but were notorious for boasting of their moral righteousness. The Jews of those days were generally admirers and followers of the Pharisees, who were full of their boasts of their moral righteousness; as we may see by the example of the Pharisee mentioned in the 18th of Luke, which Christ mentions as describing the general temper of that sect: "Lord," says he, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men, an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer." The works that he boasts of were chiefly moral works: He depended on the works of the law for justification; and therefore Christ tells us that the publican, that renounced all his own righteousness, "went down to his house justified rather than he." And elsewhere, we read of the Pharisees praying in the corners of the streets, and sounding a trumpet before them when they did alms. But those works which they so vainly boasted of were *moral* works. And not only so, but what the apostle in this very epistle condemns the Jews for, is their boasting of the moral law. Chap. ii. 22, 23. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God?" The law here mentioned that they made their boast of, was that of which adultery, idolatry, and sacrilege, were the

breaches, which is the moral law. So that this is the boasting which the apostle condemns them for; and therefore, if they were justified by the works of this law, then how comes he to say that their boasting is excluded? And besides, when they boasted of the rites of the ceremonial law, it was under a notion of its being a part of their own goodness or excellency, or what made them holier and more lovely in the sight of God than other people; and if they were not justified by this part of their own supposed goodness or holiness, yet if they were by another, how did that exclude boasting? How was their boasting excluded, unless all goodness or excellency of their own was excluded?

7. The reason given by the apostle why we can be justified only by faith, and not by the works of the law, in the 3d chap. of Gal. *viz.* "That they that are under the law, are under the curse," makes it evident that he does not mean only the ceremonial law. In that chapter the apostle had particularly insisted upon it, that Abraham was justified by faith, and that it is by faith only, and not by the works of the law, that we can be justified, and become the children of Abraham, and be made partakers of the blessing of Abraham: And he gives this reason for it, in the 10th verse: "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." It is manifest that these words, cited from Deuteronomy, are spoken not only with regard to the ceremonial law, but the whole law of God to mankind, and chiefly the moral law; and that all mankind are therefore as they are in themselves under that curse, not only while the ceremonial law lasted, but now since that has ceased. And therefore all who are justified, are redeemed from that curse, by Christ's bearing it for them; as in verse 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."—Now therefore, either its being said, that he is cursed who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of that law of which it is so said; or it is not: if it be, then it is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of the moral law, and of the whole rule which God has given mankind to walk by; for the words are spoken of the moral as well as the ceremonial law, and reach every command or precept which God has given to mankind; and chiefly the moral precepts, which are most strictly enjoined, and the violations of which in both the New Testament and the Old, and in the books of Moses themselves, are threatened with the most dreadful curse.

8. The apostle in like manner argues against our being justified by our own righteousness, as he does against being justified by

the works of the law; and evidently uses the expressions, of our *own righteousness*, and *works of the law*, promiscuously, and as signifying the same thing. It is particularly evident by Rom. x. 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Here it is plain that the same thing is asserted as in the two last verses but one of the foregoing chapter. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." And it is very unreasonable, upon several accounts, to suppose that the apostle, by their own righteousness, intends only their ceremonial righteousness. For when the apostle warns us against trusting in our own righteousness for justification, doubtless it is fair to interpret the expression in an agreement with other scriptures, where we are warned, not to think that it is for the sake of our own righteousness that we obtain God's favour and blessing: as particularly in Deut. ix. 4—6. "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which he sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people." None will pretend that here the expression *thy righteousness*, signifies only a ceremonial righteousness, but all virtue or goodness of their own; yea, and the inward goodness of the heart, as well as the outward goodness of life; which appears by the beginning of the 5th verse, "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart;" and also by the antithesis in the 6th verse, "Not for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people." Their stiff-neckedness was their moral wickedness, obstinacy, and perverseness of heart. By righteousness, therefore, on the contrary, is meant their moral virtue, and rectitude of heart and life. This is what I would argue from hence, that the expression of *our own righteousness*, when used in scripture with relation to the favour of God—and when we are warned against looking upon it as that by which that favour, or the fruits of it, are obtained—does not signify only a ceremonial righteousness, but all manner of goodness of our own.

The Jews also, in the New Testament, are condemned for trusting in their own righteousness in this sense; Luke xviii. 9, &c. "And he spake this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous." This intends chiefly a moral righteousness; as appears by the parable itself, in which we have an account of the prayer of the Pharisee, wherein the things that he mentions as what he trusts in, are chiefly moral qualifications and performances, *viz.* That he was not an extortioner, unjust, nor an adulterer, &c.

But we need not go to the writings of other penmen of the scripture. If we will allow the apostle Paul to be his own interpreter, he—when he speaks of our own righteousness as that by which we are not justified or saved—does not mean only a ceremonial righteousness, nor does he only intend a way of religion and serving God, of our own choosing, without divine warrant or prescription; but by our own righteousness he means the same as a righteousness of our own doing, whether it be a service or righteousness of God's prescribing, or our own unwarranted performing. Let it be an obedience to the ceremonial law, or a gospel obedience, or what it will, if it be a righteousness of our own doing, it is excluded by the apostle in this affair, as is evident by Titus iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done."——But I would more particularly insist on this text; and therefore this may be the

9th argument, That the apostle, when he denies justification by works, works of the law, and our own righteousness, does not mean works of the ceremonial law only. Tit. iii. 3—7. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Works of righteousness that we have done are here excluded, as what we are neither saved nor justified by. The apostle expressly says, we are not saved by them; and it is evident that when he says this, he has respect to the affair of justification. And that he means, we are not *saved* by them in not being *justified* by them, as by the next verse but one, which is part of the same sentence, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

It is several ways manifest, that the apostle in this text, by "works of righteousness which we have done," does not mean

only works of the ceremonial law. It appears by the third verse, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." These are breaches of the moral law, that the apostle observes they lived in before they were justified: and it is most plain that it is this which gives occasion to the apostle to observe, as he does in the fifth verse, that it was not by works of righteousness which they had done, that they were saved or justified.

But we need not go to the context; it is most apparent from the words themselves, that the apostle does not mean only works of the ceremonial law. If he had only said it is not by our own works of righteousness; what could we understand by works of righteousness, but only righteous works, or, which is the same thing, good works? And to say, that it is by our own righteous works that we are justified, though not by one particular kind of righteous works, would certainly be a contradiction to such an assertion. But, the words are rendered yet more strong, plain, and determined in their sense, by those additional words, *which we have done;* which shews that the apostle intends to exclude all our own righteous or virtuous works universally. If it should be asserted concerning any commodity, treasure, or precious jewel, that it could not be procured by money, and not only so, but, to make the assertion the more strong, it should be asserted with additional words, that it could not be procured by money that men possess, how unreasonable would it be, after all, to say, that all that was meant was, that it could not be procured with brass money!

And what renders the interpreting of this text, as intending works of the ceremonial law, yet more unreasonable, is, that these works were indeed no works of righteousness at all, but were only falsely supposed to be so by the Jews. And this our opponents in this doctrine also suppose is the very reason why we are not justified by them, because they are not works of righteousness, or because (the ceremonial law being now abrogated) there is no obedience in them. But how absurd is it to say, that the apostle, when he says we are not justified by works of righteousness that we have done, meant only works of the ceremonial law, and that for that very reason, because they are not works of righteousness? To illustrate this by the forementioned comparison: If it should be asserted, that such a thing could not be procured by money that men possess, how ridiculous would it be to say, that the meaning only was, that it could not be procured by counterfeit money, and that for that reason, because it was not money. What scripture will stand before men, if they will take liberty to manage scripture thus? Or what one text is there in the Bible that

may not at this rate be explained all away, and perverted to any sense men please?

But further, if we should allow that the apostle intends only to oppose justification by works of the ceremonial law in this text, yet it is evident by the expression he uses, that he means to oppose it under that notion, or in that quality, of their being works of righteousness of our own doing. But if the apostle argues against our being justified by works of the ceremonial law, under the notion of their being of that nature and kind, *viz.* works of our own doing, then it will follow, that the apostle's argument is strong against, not only those, but all of that nature and kind, even all that are of our own doing.

If there were no other text in the Bible about justification but this, this would clearly and invincibly prove, that we are not justified by any of our own goodness, virtue, or righteousness, or for the excellency or righteousness of any thing that we have done in religion; because it is here so fully and strongly asserted; but this text abundantly confirms other texts of the apostle, where he denies justification by works of the law. No doubt can be rationally made, but that the apostle, when he shews, that God does not save us by "works of righteousness that we have done," ver. 5. and that so we are "justified by grace," verse 7. herein opposing salvation by works, and salvation by grace—means the *same* works as he does in other places, where he in like manner opposes works and grace: as in Rom. xi. 6. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." And the same works as in Rom. iv. 4. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." And the same works that are spoken of in the context of the 24th verse of the foregoing chapter, which the apostle there calls "works of the law, being justified freely by his grace." And of the 4th chapter, 16th verse, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." Where in the context the righteousness of faith is opposed to the righteousness of the law: for here God's saving us according to his mercy, and justifying us by grace, is opposed to saving us by works of righteousness that we have done; in the same manner as in those places, justifying us by his grace, is opposed to justifying us by works of the law.

10. The apostle could not mean only works of the ceremonial law, when he says, we are not justified by the works of the law, because it is asserted of the saints under the Old Testament as well as New. If men are justified by their sincere obedience, it will then follow that formerly, before the ceremonial law was abrogated, men were justified by the works of the ceremonial law, as well

as the moral. For if we are justified by our sincere obedience, then it alters not the case, whether the commands be moral or positive, provided they be God's commands, and our obedience be obedience to God. And so the case must be just the same under the Old Testament, with the works of the moral law and ceremonial, according to the measure of the virtue of obedience there was in either. It is true, their obedience to the ceremonial law would have nothing to do in the affair of justification, unless it was sincere; and so neither would the works of the moral law. If obedience was the thing, then obedience to the ceremonial law, while that stood in force, and obedience to the moral law, had just the same sort of concern, according to the proportion of obedience that consists in each; as now under the New Testament, if obedience is what we are justified by, that obedience must doubtless comprehend obedience to all God's commands now in force, to the positive precepts of attendance on baptism and the Lord's supper, as well as moral precepts. If obedience be the thing, it is not because it is obedience to such a kind of commands, but because it is *obedience*. So that by this supposition, the saints under the Old Testament were justified, at least in part, by their obedience to the ceremonial law.

But it is evident that the saints under the Old Testament were not justified, in any measure, by the works of the ceremonial law. This may be proved, proceeding on the foot of our adversaries' own interpretation of the apostle's phrase, "the works of the law," and supposing them to mean by it only the works of the ceremonial law. To instance in David, it is evident that he was not justified in any wise by the works of the ceremonial law, by Rom. iv. 6—8. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." It is plain that the apostle is here speaking of justification, from the preceding verse, and all the context; and the thing spoken of, *viz.* forgiving iniquities and covering sins, is what our adversaries themselves suppose to be justification, and even the whole of justification. This David, speaking of himself, says (by the apostle's interpretation) that he had *without* works. For it is manifest that David, in the words here cited, from the beginning of the 32d psalm, has a special respect to himself: he speaks of his own sins being forgiven and not imputed to him; as appears by the words that immediately follow.—"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old; through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid:

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Let us therefore understand the apostle which way we will respecting works, when he says, "David describes the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works," whether of all manner of works, or only works of the ceremonial law, yet it is evident at least, that David was not justified by works of the ceremonial law. Therefore here is the argument: If our own obedience be that by which men are justified, then under the Old Testament, men were justified partly by obedience to the ceremonial law, (as has been proved;) but the saints under the Old Testament were not justified partly by the works of the ceremonial law; therefore men's own obedience is not that by which they are justified.

11. Another argument that the apostle, when he speaks of the two opposite ways of justification, one by the works of the law, and the other by faith, does not mean only the works of the ceremonial law, may be taken from Rom. x. 5, 6. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things, shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise," &c. Here two things are evident:

First, That the apostle here speaks of the same two opposite ways of justification, one by the righteousness which is of the law, the other by faith, that he had treated of in the former part of the epistle: and therefore it must be the same law that is here spoken of. The same law is here meant as in the last verses of the foregoing chapter, where he says, the Jews had "not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law;" as is plain, because the apostle is still speaking of the same thing; the words are a continuation of the same discourse, as may be seen at first glance, by any one that looks on the context.

Secondly, It is manifest that Moses, when he describes the righteousness which is of the law, or the way of justification by the law, in the words here cited, "He that doth these things, shall live in them," does not speak only, nor chiefly, of the works of the ceremonial law; for none will pretend that God ever made such a covenant with man, that he who kept the ceremonial law should live in it, or that there ever was a time, that it was chiefly by the works of the ceremonial law that men lived and were justified. Yea, it is manifest by the forementioned instance of David, mentioned in the 4th of Romans, that there never was a time wherein men were justified in any measure by the works of the ceremonial law, as has been just now shewn. Moses therefore, in those words which, the apostle says, are a description of the righteousness which is of the law, cannot mean only the ceremo-

nial law. And therefore it follows, that when the apostle speaks of justification by the works of the law, as opposite to justification by faith, he does not mean only the ceremonial law, but also the works of the moral law, which are the things spoken of by Moses, when he says, "he that doth those things, shall live in them." And these are the things which the apostle in this very place is arguing that we cannot be justified by; as is evident by the last verses of the preceding chapter; "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law," &c. And in the 3d verse of this chapter, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

And further, how can the apostle's description that he here gives from Moses, of this exploded way of justification by the works of the law, consist with the Arminian scheme, of a way of justification by the virtue of a sincere obedience, that still remains as the true and only way of justification under the gospel? It is most apparent that it is the design of the apostle to give a description of both the legal rejected and the evangelical valid ways of justification, in that wherein they are distinguished the one from the other. But how is it, that "he who doth those things, shall live in them," *that* wherein the way of justification by the works of the law is distinguished from that in which Christians under the gospel are justified, according to their scheme; for still, according to them it may be said, in the same manner, of the precepts of the gospel, he that doth these things, shall live in them. The difference lies only in the things to be done, but not at all in that the doing of them is not the condition of living in them, just in the one case as in the other. The words, "He that doth them, shall live in them," will serve just as well for a description of the latter as the former. By the apostle's saying, the righteousness of the law is described thus, he that doth these things, shall live in them; but the righteousness of faith saith thus, plainly intimates that the righteousness of faith saith otherwise, and in an opposite manner. Besides, if these words cited from Moses are actually said by him of the moral law as well as ceremonial, as it is most evident they are, it renders it still more absurd to suppose them mentioned by the apostle, as the very note of distinction between justification by a ceremonial obedience, and a moral sincere obedience, as the Arminians must suppose.

Thus I have spoken to a second argument, to prove that we are not justified by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own, *viz.* that to suppose otherwise, is contrary to the doctrine directly

urged, and abundantly insisted on, by the apostle Paul in his epistles.

I now proceed to a

Third argument, *viz.* That to suppose that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, or any of our own virtue or goodness, derogates from gospel grace.

That scheme of justification that manifestly takes from, or diminishes the grace of God, is undoubtedly to be rejected; for it is the declared design of God in the gospel to exalt the freedom and riches of his grace, in that method of justification of sinners, and way of admitting them to his favour, and the blessed fruits of it, which it declares. The scripture teaches, that the way of justification appointed in the gospel-covenant, is appointed for that end, that free grace might be expressed, and glorified; Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." The exercising and magnifying of free grace in the gospel-contrivance for the justification and salvation of sinners, is evidently the chief design of it. And this freedom and riches of grace in the gospel is every where spoken of in scripture as the chief glory of it. Therefore that doctrine which derogates from the free grace of God in justifying sinners, as it is most opposite to God's design, so it must be exceedingly offensive to him.

Those who maintain, that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, pretend that their scheme does not diminish the grace of the gospel; for they say, that the grace of God is wonderfully manifested in appointing such a way and method of salvation by sincere obedience, in assisting us to perform such an obedience, and in accepting our imperfect obedience, instead of perfect.

Let us therefore examine that matter, whether their scheme, of a man's being justified by his own virtue and sincere obedience, does derogate from the grace of God or no; or whether free grace is not more exalted in supposing, as we do, that we are justified without any manner of goodness of our own. In order to this, I will lay down the self-evident

Proposition, that whatsoever that be by which the abundant benevolence of the giver is expressed, and gratitude in the receiver is obliged, that magnifies free grace. This I suppose none will ever controvert or dispute. And it is not much less evident, that it doth both shew a more abundant benevolence in the giver when he shews kindness without goodness or excellency in the object, to move him to it; and that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver.

1. It shews a more abundant goodness in the giver, when he shews kindness without any excellency in our persons or actions that should move the giver to love and beneficence. For it certainly shews the more abundant and overflowing goodness, or dis-

position to communicate good, by how much the less loveliness or excellency there is to entice beneficence. The less there is in the receiver to draw good-will and kindness, it argues the more of the principle of good-will and kindness in the giver. One that has but a little of a principle of love and benevolence, may be drawn to do good, and to shew kindness, when there is a great deal to draw him, or when there is much excellency and loveliness in the object to move good-will; when he whose goodness and benevolence is more abundant, will shew kindness where there is less to draw it forth; for he does not so much need to have it drawn from without, he has enough of the principle within to move him of itself. Where there is most of the principle, there it is most sufficient for itself, and stands in least need of something without to excite it. For certainly a more abundant goodness more easily flows forth with less to impel or draw it, than where there is less; or, which is the same thing, the more any one is disposed of himself, the less he needs from without himself, to put him upon it, or stir him up to it. And therefore his kindness and goodness appears the more exceeding great, when it is bestowed without any excellency or loveliness at all in the receiver, or when the receiver is respected in the gift, as wholly without excellency. And much more still when the benevolence of the giver not only finds nothing in the receiver to draw it, but a great deal of hatefulness to repel it. The abundance of goodness is then manifested, not only in flowing forth without any thing extrinsic to put it forward, but in overcoming great repulsion in the object. And then does kindness and love appear most triumphant, and wonderfully great, when the receiver is not only wholly without all excellency or beauty to attract it, but altogether, yea, infinitely vile and hateful.

2. It is apparent also that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver. This is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, that the less worthy or excellent the object of benevolence, or the receiver of kindness is, the more he is obliged, and the greater gratitude is due. He therefore is most of all obliged, that receives kindness without any goodness or excellency in himself, but with a total and universal hatefulness. And as it is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, so it is agreeable to the word of God. How often does God in the scripture insist on this argument with men, to move them to love him, and to acknowledge his kindness? How much does he insist on this as an obligation to gratitude, that they are so sinful, and undeserving, and ill-deserving?

Therefore it certainly follows, that the doctrine which teaches, that God, when he justifies a man, and shews him such great kindness as to give him a right to eternal life, does not do it for

any obedience, or any manner of goodness of his; but that justification respects a man as ungodly, and wholly without any manner of virtue, beauty, or excellency. I say, this doctrine does certainly more exalt the free grace of God in justification, and man's obligation to gratitnde for such a favour, than the contrary doctrine, *viz.* That God, in shewing this kindness to man, respects him as sincerely obedient and virtuous, and as having something in him that is truly excellent and lovely, and acceptable in his sight, and that this goodness or excellency of man is the very fundamental condition of the bestowment of that kindness on him, or of distinguishing him from others by that benefit. But I hasten to a

Fourth argument for the truth of the doctrine, That to suppose a man is justified by his own virtue or obedience, derogates from the honour of the Mediator, and ascribes that to man's virtue which belongs only to the righteousness of Christ: It puts man in Christ's stead, and makes him his own saviour, in a respect in which Christ only is his Saviour. And so it is a doctrine contrary to the nature and design of the gospel, which is to abase man, and to ascribe all the glory of our salvation to Christ the Redeemer. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is a gospel-doctrine.

Here I would *explain* what we mean by the *imputation* of Christ's righteousness. *Prove* the thing intended by it to be true. *Shew* that this doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience.

First, I would explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sometimes the expression is taken by our divines in a larger sense, for the imputation of all that Christ did and suffered for our redemption, whereby we are free from guilt, and stand righteous in the sight of God; and so implies the imputation both of Christ's satisfaction and obedience. But here I intend it in a stricter sense, for the imputation of that righteousness or moral goodness that consists in the obedience of Christ.—And by that righteousness being *imputed* to us, is meant no other than this, that the righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness which ought to be in ourselves. Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it, as though we had performed it ourselves. And so we suppose that a title to eternal life is given us as the reward of this righteousness. The scripture uses the word *impute* in this sense, *viz.* for reckoning any thing belonging to any person, to another person's account: As Philemon 18. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." In the original it is

τατο ἐμοὶ ἐλλογα: *impute that to me.* It is a word of the same root with that which is translated *impute*, Rom. iv. 6. "To whom God imputeth righteousness without works." And it is the very same word that is used, Rom. v. 13. that is translated *impute*, "sin is not imputed when there is no law."

The opposers of this doctrine suppose that there is an absurdity in supposing that God imputes Christ's obedience to us; it is to suppose that God is mistaken, and thinks that we performed that obedience which Christ performed. But why cannot that righteousness be reckoned to our account, and be accepted for us, without any such absurdity? Why is there any more absurdity in it, than in a merchant's transferring debt or credit from one man's account to another, when one man pays a price for another, so that it shall be accepted as if that other had paid it? Why is there any more absurdity in supposing that Christ's obedience is imputed to us, than that his satisfaction is imputed? If Christ has suffered the penalty of the law in our stead, then it will follow, that his suffering that penalty is imputed to us, that is, accepted for us, and in our stead, and is reckoned to our account, as though we had suffered it. But why may not his obeying the law of God be as rationally reckoned to our account, as his suffering the penalty of the law? Why may not a price to bring into debt, be as rationally transferred from one person's account to another, as a price to pay a debt? Having thus explained what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, I proceed,

Secondly, To prove that the righteousness of Christ is thus imputed.

1. There is the very same need of Christ's obeying the law in our stead, in order to the reward, as of his suffering the penalty of the law in our stead, in order to our escaping the penalty; and the same reason why one should be accepted on our account, as the other. There is the same need of one as the other, that the law of God might be answered: one was as requisite to answer the law as the other. It is certain, that was the reason why there was need that Christ should suffer the penalty for us, even that the law might be answered; for this the scripture plainly teaches. This is given as the reason why Christ was made a curse for us, that the law threatened a curse to us, Gal. iii. 10, 13. But the same law that fixes the curse of God as the consequence of not continuing in all things written in the law to do them, (verse 10.) has as much fixed doing those things as an antecedent of living in them, (as verse 12.) There is as much connection established in one case as in the other. There is therefore exactly the same need, from the law, of perfect obedience being fulfilled in order to our obtaining the reward, as there is of death being suffered in

order to our escaping the punishment; or the same necessity by the law, of perfect obedience preceding life, as there is of disobedience being succeeded by death. The law is, without doubt, as much of an established rule in one case as in the other.

Christ by suffering the penalty, and so making atonement for us, only removes the guilt of our sins, and so sets us in the same state that Adam was in the first moment of his creation: and it is no more fit that we should obtain eternal life only on that account, than that Adam should have the reward of eternal life, or of a confirmed and unalterable state of happiness, the first moments of his existence, without any obedience at all. Adam was not to have the reward merely on account of his being innocent; if so, he would have had it fixed upon him at once, as soon as ever he was created; for he was as innocent then as he could be. But he was to have the reward on account of his activeness in obedience; not on account merely of his not having done ill, but on account of his doing well.

So on the same account we have not eternal life merely as void of guilt, which we have by the atonement of Christ; but on the account of Christ's activeness in obedience, and doing well.—Christ is our second federal head, and is called the second Adam, (1 Cor. xv. 22.) because he acted that part for us which the first Adam should have done. When he had undertaken to stand in our stead, he was looked upon and treated as though he were guilty with our guilt; and by his bearing the penalty, he did as it were free himself from this guilt. But by this the second Adam did only bring himself into the state in which the first Adam was on the first moment of his existence, *viz.* a state of mere freedom from guilt; and hereby indeed was free from any obligation to suffer punishment: but this being supposed, there was need of something further, even a positive obedience, in order to his obtaining, as our second Adam, the reward of eternal life.

God saw meet to place man first in a state of trial, and not to give him a title to eternal life as soon as he had made him; because it was his will that he should first give honour to his authority, by fully submitting to it, in will and act, and perfectly obeying his law. God insisted upon it, that his holy majesty and law should have their due acknowledgment and honour from man, such as became the relation he stood in to that Being who created him, before he would bestow the reward of confirmed and everlasting happiness upon him; and therefore God gave him a law that he might have opportunity, by giving due honour to his authority in obeying it, to obtain this happiness. It therefore became Christ—seeing that, in assuming man to himself, he sought a title to this eternal happiness for him after he had broken the law—that he himself should become subject to God's authority, and be

in the form of a servant, that he might do that honour to God's authority for him, by his obedience, which God at first required of man as the condition of his having a title to that reward. Christ came into the world to render the honour of God's authority and law consistent with the salvation and eternal life of sinners; he came to save them, and yet withal to assert and vindicate the honour of the law-giver, and his holy law. Now, if the sinner, after his sin was satisfied for, had eternal life bestowed upon him without active righteousness, the honour of his law would not be sufficiently vindicated. Supposing this were possible, that the sinner could himself, by suffering, pay the debt, and afterwards be in the same state that he was in before his probation, that is to say, negatively righteous, or merely without guilt; if he now at last should have eternal life bestowed upon him, without performing that condition of obedience; then God would recede from his law, and would give the promised reward, and his law never have respect and honour shewn to it, in that way of being obeyed. But now Christ, by subjecting himself to the law, and obeying it, has done great honour to the law, and to the authority of God who gave it. That so glorious a person should become subject to the law, and fulfil it, has done much more to honour it, than if mere man had obeyed it. It was a thing infinitely honourable to God, that a person of infinite dignity was not ashamed to call him his God, and to adore and obey him as such. This was more to God's honour than if any mere creature, of any possible degree of excellence and dignity, had so done.

It is absolutely necessary, that in order to a sinner's being justified, the righteousness of some other should be reckoned to his account; for it is declared, that the person justified is looked upon as (in himself) ungodly; but God neither will nor can justify a person without a righteousness; for justification is manifestly a *forensic* term, as the word is used in scripture, and a judicial thing, or the act of a judge. So that if a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth. The sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed, that is, by the judge, properly looked upon as his. To say, that God does not justify the sinner without sincere, though an imperfect obedience, does not help the case; for an imperfect righteousness before a judge is no righteousness. To accept of something that falls short of the rule, instead of something else that answers the rule, is no judicial act, or act of a judge, but a pure act of sovereignty. An imperfect righteousness is no righteousness before a judge: For "righteousness (as one observes) is a relative thing, and has always relation to a law. The formal nature of righteousness, properly understood, lies in a conformity of actions to that which

is the rule and measure of them." Therefore that only is righteousness in the sight of a judge that answers the law*. The law is the judge's rule: If he pardons and hides what really is, and so does not pass sentence according to what things are in themselves, he either does not act the part of a judge, or else judges falsely. The very notion of judging is to determine what is, and what is not in any one's case. The judge's work is two-fold; it is to determine first what is fact, and then whether what is in fact be according to rule, or according to the law. If a judge has no rule or law established beforehand, by which he should proceed in judging, he has no foundation to go upon in judging, he has no opportunity to be a judge; nor is it possible that he should do the part of a judge. To judge without a law, or rule by which to judge, is impossible; for the very notion of judging, is to deter-

* That perfect obedience, is what is called righteousness in the New Testament, and that this righteousness or perfect obedience, is by God's fixed unalterable rule the condition of justification, is, from the plain evidence of truth, confessed by a certain great man, whom nobody will think to be blinded by prejudice in favour of the doctrine we are maintaining, and one who did not receive this doctrine. Mr. Locke, in his "Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures," vol. ii. of his works, p. 474, writes thus: "To one that thus unbiassed reads the Scripture, what Adam fell from, is visible, was the state of perfect obedience, which is called justice in the New Testament, though the word, which in the original signifies justice, be translated righteousness."—Ibid p. 476, 477. "For righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law, seems by the scripture to have a claim of right to eternal life; Rom. iv. 4. 'To him that worketh,' i. e. does the works of the law, 'is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.'—On the other side, it seems the unalterable purpose of divine justice, that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in Paradise; but that the wages of sin should be to every man as it was to Adam, an exclusion of him out of that happy state of immortality, and bring death upon him. And this is so conformable to the eternal and established law of right and wrong, that it is spoke of too as if it could not be otherwise.—Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death; immortality and bliss belong to the righteous. Those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God are out of the reach of death; but an exclusion from Paradise and loss of immortality, is the portion of sinners, of all those who have any way broke that law, and failed of a complete obedience to it, by the guilt of any one transgression. And thus mankind, by the law, are put upon the issues of life or death, as they are righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust, i. e. exact performers, or transgressors of the law." Again, in p. 477. "The law of works then in short is, that law which requires prefect obedience, without any remission or abatement; so that by that law a man cannot be just or justified, without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect obedience in the New Testament, is termed δικαιοσυνη which we translate *righteousness*." In which last passage it is also to be noted, that Mr. Locke, by the law of works, does not understand the ceremonial law, but the covenant of works; as he more fully expresses himself in the next paragraph but one. Where this law of works was to be found, the New Testament tells us, viz. in the law delivered by Moses; John i. 17. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Chap. vii. 19. "Did not Moses give you the law, (says our Saviour,) and yet none of you keep the law?" And this is the law which he speaks of—verse 28. "This do, and thou shalt live." This is that which St. Paul so often styles *the law*, without any other distinction; Rom. ii. 13. "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified." It is needless to quote any more places, his epistles are all full of it, especially this to the Romans.

mine whether the object of judgment be according to rule; and therefore God has declared, that when he acts as a judge, he will not justify the wicked, and cannot clear the guilty; and, by parity of reason, cannot justify without righteousness.

And the scheme of the old law's being abrogated, and a new law introduced, will not help at all in this difficulty; for an imperfect righteousness cannot answer the law of God we are under, whether that be an old or a new one; for every law requires perfect obedience to itself. Every rule whatsoever requires perfect conformity to itself; it is a contradiction to suppose otherwise. For to say, that there is a law that does not require perfect obedience to itself, is to say that there is a law that does not require all that it requires. That law that now forbids sin, is certainly the law that we are now under, (let that be an old or a new one,) or else it is not sin. That which is not forbidden, and is the breach of no law, is no sin. But if we are now forbidden to commit sin, then it is by a law that we are now under; for surely we are neither under the forbiddings nor commanding of a law that we are not under. Therefore, if all sin is now forbidden, then we are now under a law that requires perfect obedience; and therefore nothing can be accepted as a righteousness in the sight of our Judge, but perfect righteousness. So that our Judge cannot justify us, unless he sees a perfect righteousness, some way belonging to us, either performed by ourselves, or by another, and justly and duly reckoned to our account.

God doth, in the sentence of justification, pronounce a man perfectly righteous, or else he would need a further justification after he is justified. His sins being removed by Christ's atonement, is not sufficient for his justification; for justifying a man, as has been already shewn, is not merely pronouncing him innocent, or without guilt, but standing right with regard to the rule that he is under, and righteous unto life: but this, according to the established rule of nature, reason, and divine appointment, is a positive, perfect righteousness.

As there is the same need that Christ's obedience should be reckoned to our account, as that his atonement should; so there is the same reason why it should. As if Adam had persevered, and finished his course of obedience, we should have received the benefit of his obedience, as much as now we have the mischief of his disobedience; so in like manner, there is reason that we should receive the benefit of the second Adam's obedience, as of his atonement of our disobedience. Believers are represented in Scripture as being so in Christ, as that they are legally one, or accepted as one, by the Supreme Judge: Christ has assumed our nature, and has so assumed all, in that nature that belongs to him, into such an union with himself, that he is become their

Head, and has taken them to be his members. And therefore, what Christ has done in our nature, whereby he did honour to the law and authority of God by his acts, as well as the reparation to the honour of the law by his sufferings, is reckoned to the believer's account; so as that the believer should be made happy, because it was so well and worthily done by his head, as well as freed from being miserable, because he has suffered for our ill and unworthy doing.

When Christ had once undertaken with God to stand for us, and put himself under our law, by that law he was obliged to suffer, and by the same law he was obliged to obey: By the same law, after he had taken man's guilt upon him, he himself being our surety, could not be acquitted till he had suffered, nor rewarded till he had obeyed: But he was not acquitted as a private person, but as our head, and believers are acquitted in his acquittance; nor was he accepted to a reward for his obedience, as a private person, but as our head, and we are accepted to a reward in his acceptance. The scripture teaches us, that when Christ was raised from the dead, he was justified; which justification, as I have already shewn, implies both his acquittance from our guilt, and his acceptance to the exaltation and glory that was the reward of his obedience: But believers, as soon as they believe, are admitted to partake with Christ in this his justification: Hence we are told, that he was "raised again for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25.) which is true, not only of that part of his justification that consists in his acquittance, but also his acceptance to his reward. The scripture teaches us, that he is exalted, and gone to heaven to take possession of glory in our name, as our forerunner, Heb. vi. 20. We are as it were, both raised up together with Christ, and also made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, and in him, Eph. ii. 6.

If it be objected here, that there is this reason, why what Christ suffered should be accepted on our account, rather than the obedience he performed, that he was obliged to obedience for himself, but was not obliged to suffer but only on our account: to this I answer, That Christ was not obliged, on his own account, to undertake to obey. Christ in his orignal circumstances, was in no subjection to the Father, being altogether equal with him: He was under no obligation to put himself in man's stead, and under man's law; or to put himself into any state of subjection to God whatsoever. There was a transaction between the Father and the Son, that was antecedent to Christ's becoming man, and being made under the law, wherein he undertook to put himself under the law, and both to obey and to suffer; in which transaction these things were already virtually done in the sight of God; as is evident by this, that God acted on the ground of that transac-

tion, justifying and saving sinners, as if the things undertaken had been actually performed long before they were performed indeed. And therefore, without doubt, in order to estimate the value and validity of what Christ did and suffered, we must look back to that transaction, wherein these things were first undertaken, and virtually done in the sight of God, and see what capacity and circumstances Christ acted in them, and we shall find that Christ was under no manner of obligation, either to obey the law, or to suffer its penalty. After this he was equally under obligation to both; for henceforward he stood as our surety or representative: And therefore this consequent obligation may be as much of an objection against the validity of his suffering the penalty, as against his obedience. But if we look to that original transaction between the Father and the Son, wherein both these were undertaken and accepted as virtually done in the sight of the Father, we shall find Christ acting with regard to both as one perfectly in his own right, and under no manner of previous obligation to hinder the validity of either.

2. To suppose that all Christ does is only to make atonement for us by suffering, is to make him our Saviour but in part. It is to rob him of half his glory as a Saviour. For if so, all that he does is to deliver us from hell; he does not purchase heaven for us. The adverse scheme supposes that he purchases heaven for us, in that he satisfies for the imperfections of our obedience, and so purchases that our sincere imperfect obedience might be accepted as the condition of eternal life; and so purchases an opportunity for us to obtain heaven by our own obedience. But to purchase heaven for us only in this sense, is to purchase it in no sense at all; for all of it comes to no more than a satisfaction for our sins, or removing the penalty by suffering in our stead. For all the purchasing they speak of, that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, is only his satisfying for the sinful imperfection of our obedience; or (which is the same thing) making atonement for the sin that our obedience is attended with. But that is not purchasing heaven, merely to set us at liberty again, that we may go and get heaven by what we do ourselves: all that Christ does is only to pay a debt for us; there is no positive purchase of any good. We are taught in scripture that heaven is purchased for us; it is called the *purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. The gospel proposes the eternal inheritance, not to be acquired, as the first covenant did, but as already acquired and purchased. But he that pays a man's debt for him, and so delivers him from slavery, cannot be said to purchase an estate for him, merely because he sets him at liberty, so that henceforward he has an opportunity to get an estate by his own hand-labour. So that according to this scheme, the saints in heaven have no reason to thank

Christ for purchasing heaven for them, or redeeming them to God, and making them kings and priests, as we have an account that they do, in Rev. v. 9.

3. Justification by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, is a doctrine that the scripture teaches in very full terms; Rom. v. 18, 19. "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall all be made righteous." Here in one verse we are told, that we have justification by Christ's righteousness; and, that there might be no room to understand the righteousness spoken of, merely of Christ's atonement by his suffering the penalty, in the next verse it is put in other terms, and asserted, that it is by Christ's obedience we are made righteous. It is scarcely possible any thing should be more full and determined: The terms, taken singly, are such as fix their own meaning, and taken together, they fix the meaning of each other. The words shew that we are justified by that righteousness of Christ which consists in his obedience, and that we are made righteous or justified by that obedience of his, that is, his righteousness, or moral goodness before God.

Here possibly, it may be objected, that this text means only, that we are justified by Christ's passive obedience.

To this I answer, whether we call it active or passive, it alters not the case as to the present argument, as long as it is evident by the words, that it is not merely under the notion of an atonement for disobedience, or a satisfaction for unrighteousness, but under the notion of a positive obedience, and a righteousness, or moral goodness, that it justifies us, or makes us righteous; because both the words *righteousness* and *obedience* are used, and used too as the opposites to sin and disobedience, and an offence. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Now, what can be meant by righteousness, when spoken of as the opposite to sin, or moral evil, but moral goodness? What is the righteousness that is the opposite of an offence, but the behaviour that is well pleasing? and what can be meant by obedience, when spoken of as the opposite of disobedience, or going contrary to a command, but a positive obeying and an actual complying with the command? So that there is no room for any invented distinction of active and passive, to hurt the argument from this scripture; for it is evident by it, as any thing can be, that believers are justified by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, under the notion of his moral

goodness;—his positive obeying, and actual complying with the commands of God, and that behaviour which because of its conformity to his commands, was well-pleasing in his sight. This is all that ever any need to desire to have granted in this dispute.

By this it appears, that if Christ's dying be here included in the words *righteousness* and *obedience*, it is not merely as a propitiation, or bearing a penalty of a broken law in our stead, but as his voluntary submitting and yielding himself to those sufferings, was an act of obedience to the Father's commands, and so was a part of his positive righteousness, or moral goodness.

Indeed all obedience, considered under the notion of righteousness, is something active, something done in voluntary compliance with a command; whether it may be done without suffering, or whether it be hard and difficult; yet as it is obedience, righteousness, or moral goodness, it must be considered as something voluntary and active. If any one is commanded to go through difficulties and sufferings, and he, in compliance with this command, voluntarily does it, he properly obeys in so doing; and as he voluntarily does it in compliance with a command, his obedience is as active as any whatsoever. It is the same sort of obedience, a thing of the very same nature, as when a man, in compliance with a command, does a piece of hard service, or goes through hard labour; and there is no room to distinguish between such obedience of it, as if it were a thing of quite a different nature, by such opposite terms as active and passive; all the distinction that can be pretended, is that which is between obeying an easy command and a difficult one. But is there from hence any foundation to make two species of obedience, one active and the other passive? There is no appearance of any such distinction ever entering into the hearts of any of the penmen of scripture.

It is true, that of late, when a man refuses to obey the precept of a human law, but patiently yields himself up to suffer the penalty of the law, it is called *passive* obedience: but this I suppose is only a modern use of the word *obedience;* surely it is a sense of the word that the scripture is perfectly a stranger to. It is improperly called obedience, unless there be such a precept in the law, that he shall yield himself patiently to suffer, to which his so doing shall be an active voluntary conformity. There may in some sense be said to be a conformity to the law in a person's suffering the penalty of the law; but no other conformity to the law is properly called obedience to it, but an active voluntary conformity to the precepts of it. The word *obey* is often found in scripture with respect to the law of God to man, but never in any other sense.

It is true that Christ's *willingly* undergoing those sufferings which he endured, is a great part of that obedience or righteousness by which we are justified. The sufferings of Christ are respected in scripture under a two-fold consideration, either merely as his being substituted for us, or put into our stead, in suffering the penalty of the law; and so his sufferings are considered as a satisfaction and propitiation for sin; or as he, in obedience to a law or command of the Father, voluntarily submitted himself to those sufferings, and actively yielded himself up to bear them: and so they are considered as his righteousness, and a part of his active obedience. Christ underwent death in obedience to the command of the Father, Psalm xl. 6—8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." John x. 17, 18. "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John xviii. 11. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And this is part, and indeed the principal part of that active obedience by which we are justified.

It can be no just objection against this, that the command of the Father to Christ, that he should lay down his life, was no part of the law that we had broken; and therefore, that his obeying this command could be no part of that obedience that he performed for us, because we needed that he should obey no other law for us, but only that which we had broken or failed of obeying. For although it must be the same legislative authority, whose honour is repaired by Christ's obedience, that we have injured by our disobedience; yet there is no need that the law which Christ obeys should be precisely the same that Adam was to have obeyed, in that sense, that there should be no positive precepts wanting, nor any added. There was wanting the precept about the forbidden fruit, and there was added the ceremonial law. The thing required was perfect obedience. It is no matter whether the positive precepts were the same, if they were equivalent. The positive precepts that Christ was to obey, were much more than equivalent to what was wanting, because infinitely more difficult, particularly the command that he had received to lay down his life, which was his principal act of obedience, and which, above all others, is concerned in our justification. As that act of disobedience by which we fell, was disobedience to a positive precept that Christ never was under, *viz.* that of abstaining from the tree

of knowledge of good and evil; so that act of obedience by which principally we are redeemed, is obedience to a positive precept that Adam never was under, *viz.* the precept of laying down his life. It was suitable that it should be a positive precept, that should try both Adam's and Christ's obedience. Such precepts are the greatest and most proper trial of obedience: because in them, the mere authority and will of the legislator is the sole ground of the obligation, (and nothing in the nature of the things themselves;) and therefore they are the greatest trial of any person's respect to that authority and will.

The law that Christ was subject to, and obeyed, was in some sense the same that was given to Adam. There are innumerable particular duties required by the law only conditionally; and in such circumstances, are comprehended in some great and general rule of that law. Thus, for instance, there are innumerable acts of respect and obedience to men, which are required by the law of nature, (which was a law given to Adam,) which yet are not required absolutely, but upon many pre-requisite conditions; as, that there be men standing in such relations to us, and that they give forth such commands, and the like. So many acts of respect and obedience to God are included, in like manner, in the moral law conditionally, or such and such things being supposed; as Abraham's going about to sacrifice his son, the Jews circumcising their children when eight days old, and Adam's not eating the forbidden fruit: they are virtually comprehended in that great general rule of the moral law, that we should obey God, and be subject to him in whatsoever he pleases to command us. Certainly the moral law does as much require us to obey God's positive commands, as it requires us to obey the positive commands of our parents. And thus all that Adam, and all that Christ was commanded, even his observing the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish worship, and his laying down his life, was virtually included in this same great law*.

It is no objection against the last-mentioned thing, even Christ's laying down his life, it being included in the moral law given to

* Thus Mr. Locke in his "Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the scriptures," vol. ii. of his work, p. 478. "Nay *whatever God requires any where to be done*, without making any allowance for faith, that is a part of the law of works. So that forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, was part of the law of works. Only we must take notice here, that some of God's positive commands being for peculiar ends, and suited to particular circumstances of times, places, and persons, have a limited, and only temporary obligation, by virtue of God's positive injunction. Such was that part of Moses's law, which concerned the outward worship or political constitution of the Jews, and is called the ceremonial and judaical law." Again, p. 479. Thus then, as to the law in short, the civil and ritual part of the law delivered by Moses obliges not Christians, though to the Jews it were a part of the law of works; it being a part of the law of nature, that men ought to obey every positive law of God, whenever he shall please to make any such addition to the law of his nature."

Adam, because that law itself allowed of no occasion for any such thing; for the moral law virtually includes all right acts, on all possible occasions, even occasions that the law itself allows not: thus we are obliged by the moral law to mortify our lusts, and repent of our sins, though that law allows of no lust to mortify, or sin to repent of.

There is indeed but one great law of God, and that is the same law that says, "if thou sinnest, thou shalt die;" and "cursed is every one that continues not in all things contained in this law to do them." All duties of positive institution are virtually comprehended in this law; and therefore, if the Jews broke the ceremonial law, it exposed them to the penalty of the law, or covenant of works, which threatened, "thou shalt surely die." The law is the eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness between God and man, and therefore is the rule of judgment, by which all that a man does shall be either justified or condemned; and no sin exposes to damnation, but by the law. So now he that refuses to obey the precepts that require an attendance on the sacraments of the New Testament, is exposed to damnation, by virtue of the law or covenant of works. It may moreover be argued, that all sins whatsoever are breaches of the law or covenant of works, because all sins, even breaches of the positive precepts, as well as others, have atonement by the death of Christ: but what Christ died for, was to satisfy the law, or to bear the curse of the law; as appears by Gal. iii. 10—13, and Rom. vii. 3, 4.

So that Christ's laying down his life might be part of that obedience by which we are justified, though it was a positive precept not given to Adam. It was doubtless Christ's main act of obedience, because it was obedience to a command that was attended with immensely the greatest difficulty, and so to a command that was the greatest trial of his obedience. His respect shewn to God in it, and his honour to God's authority, was proportionably great. It is spoken of in scripture as Christ's principal act of obedience. Philip. ii. 7, 8. "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Heb. v. 8. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." It was mainly by this act of obedience that Christ purchased so glorious a reward for himself; Phil. ii. 8, 9. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." And it therefore follows, from what has been already said, that it is mainly by this act of obedience that believers in Christ also have the reward of glory, or come to partake with Christ in his glory.

We are as much saved by the death of Christ, as his yielding himself to die was an act of obedience, as we are, as it was a propitiation for our sins; for as it was not the only act of obedience that merited, he having performed meritorious acts of obedience through the whole course of his life; so neither was it the only suffering that was propitiatory; all his sufferings through the whole course of his life being propitiatory, as well as every act of obedience meritorious. Indeed this was his principal suffering; and it was as much his principal act of obedience.

Hence we may see how that the death of Christ did not only make atonement, but also merited eternal life; and hence we may see how by the blood of Christ we are not only redeemed from sin, but redeemed unto God; and therefore the Scripture seems every where to attribute the whole of salvation to the blood of Christ. This precious blood is as much the main price by which heaven is purchased, as it is the main price by which we are redeemed from hell. The positive righteousness of Christ, or that price by which he merited, was of equal value with that by which he satisfied; for indeed it was the same price. He spilled his blood to satisfy, and by reason of the infinite dignity of his person, his sufferings were looked upon as of infinite value, and equivalent to the eternal sufferings of a finite creature. And he spilled his blood out of respect to the honour of God's majesty, and in submission to his authority, who had commanded him so to do; and his obedience therein was of infinite value; both because of the dignity of the person that performed it, and because he put himself to infinite expense to perform it, whereby the infinite degree of his regard to God's authority appeared.

One would wonder what Arminians mean by Christ's merits.—They talk of Christ's merits as much as any body, and yet deny the imputation of Christ's positive righteousness. What should there be that any one should merit or deserve any thing by, besides righteousness or goodness? If any thing that Christ did or suffered, merited or deserved any thing, it was by virtue of the goodness, or righteousness, or holiness of it. If Christ's sufferings and death merited heaven, it must be because there was an excellent righteousness and transcendent moral goodness in that act of laying down his life. And if by that excellent righteousness he merited heaven for us; then surely that righteousness is reckoned to our account, that we have the benefit of it, or, which is the same thing, it is imputed to us.

Thus, I hope, I have made it evident, that the righteousness of Christ is indeed imputed to us. I proceed now to the

Third and last thing under this argument, That this doctrine, of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sin-

cere obedience. If acceptance to God's favour, and a title to life, be given to believers as the reward of Christ's obedience, then it is not given as the reward of our own obedience. In what respect soever Christ is our Saviour, that doubtless excludes our being our own saviours in that same respect. If we can be our own saviours in the same respect that Christ is, it will thence follow, that the salvation of Christ is needless in that respect; according to the apostle's reasoning, Gal. v. 4. "Christ is rendered of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." Doubtless, it is Christ's prerogative to be our Saviour in that sense wherein he is our Saviour. And therefore, if it be by his obedience that we are justified, then it is not by our own obedience.

Here perhaps it may be said, that a title to salvation is not directly given as the reward of our obedience; for that is not by any thing of ours, but only by Christ's satisfaction and righteousness; but yet an interest in that satisfaction and righteousness is given as a reward of our obedience.

But this does not at all help the case; for this is to ascribe as much to our obedience as if we ascribed salvation to it directly, without the intervention of Christ's righteousness. For it would be as great a thing for God to give us Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness, in reward for our obedience, as to give us heaven immediately; it would be as great a reward, and as great a testimony of respect to our obedience. And if God gives as great a thing as salvation for our obedience, why could he not as well give salvation itself directly? and then there would have been no need of Christ's righteousness. And indeed if God gives us Christ, or an interest in him, properly in reward of our obedience, he does really give us salvation in reward for our obedience: for the former implies the latter; yea, it implies it, as the greater implies the less. So that indeed it exalts our virtue and obedience more, to suppose that God gives us Christ in reward of that virtue and obedience, than if he should give salvation without Christ.

The thing that the scripture guards and militates against, is our imagining that it is our own goodness, virtue, or excellency, that instates us in God's acceptance and favour. But to suppose that God gives us an interest in Christ in reward for our virtue, is as great an argument that it instates us in God's favour, as if he bestowed a title to eternal life as its direct reward. If God gives us an interest in Christ as a reward of our obedience, it will then follow, that we are instated in God's acceptance and favour by our own obedience, antecedent to our having an interest in Christ. For a rewarding any one's excellency, evermore supposes favour and acceptance on the account of that excellency: It is the very notion of a reward, that it is a good thing, bestowed in testimony

of respect and favour for the virtue or excellency rewarded. So that it is not by virtue of our interest in Christ and his merits, that we first come into favour with God, according to this scheme; for we are in God's favour before we have any interest in those merits; in that we have an interest in those merits given as a fruit of God's favour for our own virtue. If our interest in Christ be the fruit of God's favour, then it cannot be the ground of it. If God did not accept us, and had no favour for us for our own excellency, he never would bestow so great a reward upon us, as a right in Christ's satisfaction, and righteousness. So that such a scheme destroys itself; for it supposes that Christ's satisfaction and righteousness are necessary for us to recommend us to the favour of God: and yet supposes that we have God's favour and acceptance before we have Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, and have these given as a fruit of God's favour.

Indeed, neither salvation itself, nor Christ the Saviour, are given as a reward of any thing in man: They are not given as a reward of faith, nor any thing else of ours: We are not united to Christ as a reward of our faith, but have union with him by faith, only as faith is the very act of uniting or closing *on our part.* As when a man offers himself to a woman in marriage, he does not give himself to her as a *reward* of her receiving him in marriage. Her receiving him is not considered as a worthy deed in her, for which he rewards her by giving himself to her; but it is by her receiving him that the union is made, by which she hath him for her husband. It is *on her part* the unition itself. By these things it appears how contrary to the gospel of Christ their scheme is, who say that faith justifies as a principle of obedience, or as a leading act of obedience; or (as others) the sum and comprehension of all evangelical obedience. For by this, the obedience or virtue that is in faith gives it its justifying influence; and that is the same thing as to say, that we are justified by our own obedience, virtue, or goodness.

Having thus considered the evidence of the truth of the doctrine, I proceed now to the

III. Thing proposed, *viz.* "To shew in what sense the acts of a Christian life, or of evangelical obedience, may be looked upon to be concerned in this affair."

From what has been said already, it is manifest that they cannot have any concern in this affair as good works, or by virtue of any moral goodness in them; not as works of the law, or as that moral excellency, or any part of it, which is the fulfilment of that great, universal, and everlasting law or covenant of works which the great lawgiver has established, as the highest and unalterable rule of judgment, which Christ alone answers, or does any thing towards it.

It having been shewn out of the scripture, that it is only by faith, or the soul's receiving and uniting to the Saviour who has wrought our righteousness, that we are justified; it therefore remains, that the acts of a Christian life cannot be concerned in this affair any otherwise than as they imply, and are the expressions of faith, and may be looked upon as so many acts of reception of Christ the Saviour. But the determining what concerns acts of Christian obedience can have in justification in this respect, will depend on the resolving of another point, *viz.* Whether any other act of faith besides the first act, has any concern in our justification, or how far perseverance in faith, or the continued and renewed acts of faith, have influence in this affair. And it seems manifest that justification is by the first act of faith, in some respects, in a peculiar manner, because a sinner is actually and finally justified as soon as he has performed one act of faith; and faith in its first act does, virtually at least, depend on God for perseverance, and entitles to this among other benefits. But yet the perseverance of faith is not excluded in this affair; it is not only certainly connected with justification, but it is not to be excluded from that on which the justification of a sinner has a dependence, or that by which he is justified.

I have shewn that the way in which justification has a dependence on faith is, that it is the qualification on which the congruity of an interest in the righteousness of Christ depends, or wherein such a fitness consists. But the consideration of the perseverance of faith cannot be excluded out of this congruity or fitness, for it is congruous that he that believes in Christ should have an interest in Christ's righteousness, and so in the eternal benefits purchased by it, because faith is that by which the soul hath union or oneness with Christ; and there is a natural congruity in it, that they who are one with Christ should have a joint interest with him in his eternal benefits; but yet this congruity depends on its being an abiding union. As it is needful that the branch should abide in the vine, in order to its receiving the lasting benefits of the root, so it is necessary that the soul should abide in Christ, in order to its receiving those lasting benefits of God's final acceptance and favour. John xv. 6, 7. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Verse 9, 10. "Continue ye in my love. If ye keep (or abide in) my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." There is the same reason why it is necessary that the union with Christ should remain, as why it should be begun: why it should continue to be, as why it should once be. If it should be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. In order

to the soul's being now in a justified state, and now free from condemnation, it is necessary that it should now be in Christ, and not merely that it should once have been in him. Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The soul is saved in Christ, as being now in him, when the salvation is bestowed, and not merely as remembering that it once was in him. Philip. iii. 9. "That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." 1 John ii. 28. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." In order to persons' being blessed after death, it is necessary not only that they should once be in him, but that they should die in him. Rev. xiv. 13. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." And there is the same reason why faith, the uniting qualification, should remain in order to the union's remaining; as why it should once be, in order to the union's once being.

So that although the sinner is actually and finally justified on the first act of faith, yet the perseverance of faith, even then, comes into consideration, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. God in the act of justification, which is passed on a sinner's first believing, has respect to perseverance, as being virtually contained in that first act of faith; and it is looked upon, and taken by him that justifies, as being as it were a property in that faith. God has respect to the believer's continuance in faith, and he is justified by that, as though it already were, because by divine establishment it shall follow; and it being by divine constitution connected with that first faith, as much as if it were a property in it, it is then considered as such, and so justification is not suspended; but were it not for this, it would be needful that it should be suspended, till the sinner had actually persevered in faith.

And that it is so, that God in the act of final justification which he passes at the sinner's conversion, has respect to perseverance in faith, and future acts of faith, as being virtually implied in the first act, is further manifest by this, *viz.* That in a sinner's justification, at his conversion there is virtually contained a forgiveness as to eternal and deserved punishment, not only of all past sins, but also of all future infirmities and acts of sin that they shall be guilty of; because that first justification is decisive and final. And yet pardon, in the order of nature, properly follows the crime, and also follows those acts of repentance and faith that respect the crime pardoned, as is manifest both from reason and scripture. David, in the beginning of Psalm xxxii. speaks of the forgiveness of sins which were doubtless committed long after he was first

godly, as being consequent on those sins, and on his repentance and faith with respect to them; and yet this forgiveness is spoken of by the apostle in the 4th of Romans, as an instance of justification by faith. Probably the sin David there speaks of is the same that he committed in the matter of Uriah, and so the pardon the same with that release from death or eternal punishment, which the prophet Nathan speaks of, 2 Sam. xii. 13. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." Not only does the manifestation of this pardon follow the sin in the order of time, but the pardon itself, in the order of nature, follows David's repentance and faith with respect to this sin; for it is spoken of in the 32nd Psalm as depending on it.

But inasmuch as a sinner, in his first justification, is for ever justified and freed from all obligation to eternal punishment, it hence of necessity follows, that future faith and repentance are beheld, in that justification, as virtually contained in that first faith and repentance; because repentance of those future sins, and faith in a Redeemer, with respect to them, or, at least, the continuance of that habit and principle in the heart that has such an actual repentance and faith in its nature and tendency, is now made sure by God's promise.—If remission of sins committed after conversion, in the order of nature, follows that faith and repentance that is after them, then it follows that future sins are respected in the first justification, no otherwise than as future faith and repentance are respected in it. And future repentance and faith are looked upon by him that justifies, as virtually implied in the first repentance and faith, in the same manner as justification from future sins is virtually implied in the first justification; which is the thing that was to be proved.

And besides, if no other act of faith could be concerned in justification but the first act, it will then follow that Christians ought never to seek justification by any other act of faith. For if justification is not to be obtained by after acts of faith, then surely it is not a duty to seek it by such acts: And so it can never be a duty for persons after they are once converted, by faith to seek God, or believingly to look to him for the remission of sin, or deliverance from the guilt of it, because deliverance from the guilt of sin, is part of what belongs to justification. And if it be not proper for converts by faith to look to God through Christ for it, then it will follow that it is not proper for them to pray for it; for Christian prayer to God for a blessing, is but an expression of faith in God for that blessing; prayer is only the voice of faith. But if these things are so, it will follow that the petition in the Lord's prayer, *forgive us our debts*, is not proper to be put up by the disciples of Christ, or to be used in Christian assemblies; and that Christ

improperly directed his disciples to use that petition, when they were all of them, except Judas, converted before. The debt that Christ directs his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of, can mean nothing else but the punishment that sin deserves, or the debt that we owe to divine justice, the ten thousand talents we owe our Lord. To pray that God would forgive our debts, is undoubtedly the same thing as to pray that God would release us from obligation to due punishment; but releasing from obligation to the punishment due to sin, and forgiving the debt that we owe to divine justice, is what appertains to justification.

And then to suppose that no after acts of faith are concerned in the business of justification, and so that it is not proper for any ever to seek justification by such acts, would be for ever to cut off those Christians that are doubtful concerning their first act of faith, from the joy and peace of believing. As the business of a justifying faith is to obtain pardon and peace with God by looking to God, and trusting in him for these blessings, so the joy and peace of that faith is in the apprehension of pardon and peace obtained by such a trust. This a Christian that is doubtful of his first act of faith cannot have from that act, because, by the supposition, he is doubtful whether it be an act of faith, and so whether he did obtain pardon and peace by that act. The proper remedy, in such a case, is now by faith to look to God in Christ for these blessings; but he is cut off from this remedy, because he is uncertain whether he has warrant so to do; for he does not know but that he has believed already; and if so, then he has no warrant to look to God by faith for these blessings now, because, by the supposition, no new act of faith is a proper means of obtaining these blessings. And so he can never properly obtain the joy of faith; for there are acts of true faith that are very weak, and the first act may be so as well as others: it may be like the first motion of the infant in the womb; it may be so weak an act, that the Christian, by examining it, may never be able to determine whether it was a true act of faith or no; and it is evident from fact, and abundant experience, that many Christians are for ever at a loss to determine which was their first act of faith. And those saints who have had a good degree of satisfaction concerning their faith, may be subject to great declensions and falls, in which case they are liable to great fears of eternal punishment; and the proper way of deliverance, is to forsake their sin by repentance, and by faith now to come to Christ for deliverance from the deserved eternal punishment; but this it would not be, if deliverance from that punishment was not this way to be obtained.

But what is a still more plain and direct evidence of what I am now arguing for, is, that the act of faith which Abraham exercised [illegible] promise of the covenant of grace that God made

to him, of which it is expressly said, Gal. iii. 6. "It was accounted to him for righteousness"—the grand instance and proof that the apostle so much insists upon throughout the 4th chapter of Romans, and 3d chapter of Galatians, to confirm his doctrine of justification by faith alone—was not Abraham's first act of faith, but was exerted long after he had by faith forsaken his own country, Heb. xi. 8, and had been treated as an eminent friend of God.

Moreover, the apostle Paul, in the 3d chap. of Philippians, tells us how earnestly he sought justification by faith, or to win Christ and obtain that righteousness which was by the faith of him, in what he did after his conversion. Verse 8, 9. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And in the two next verses he expresses the same thing in other words, and tells us how he went through sufferings, and became conformable to Christ's death, that he might be a partaker with Christ in the benefit of his resurrection; which the same apostle elsewhere teaches us, is especially justification. Christ's resurrection was his justification; in this, he that was put to death in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit; and he that was delivered for our offences, rose again for our justification. And the apostle tells us in the verses that follow in that third chapter of Philippians, that he thus sought to attain the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and so to partake of the benefit of his resurrection, still as though he had not already attained, but that he continued to follow after it.

On the whole, it appears, that the perseverance of faith is necessary, even to the congruity of justification; and that not the less, because a sinner is justified, and perseverance promised, on the first act of faith, but God, in that justification, has respect, not only to the past act of faith, but to his own promise of future acts, and to the fitness of a qualification beheld as yet only in his own promise. And that perseverance in faith is thus necessary to salvation, not merely as a *sine qua non*, or as an universal concomitant of it, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest by many scriptures; I would mention two or three—Heb. iii. 6. "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Verse 14, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Chap. vi. 12, "Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Rom. xi. 20, "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off; but thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear."

And, as the congruity to a final justification depends on perseverance in faith, as well as the first act, so oftentimes the manifestation of justification in the conscience, arises a great deal more from after acts, than the first act. And all the difference whereby the first act of faith has a concern in this affair that is peculiar, seems to be, as it were, only an accidental difference, arising from the circumstance of time, or its being first in order of time; and not from any peculiar respect that God has to it, or any influence it has of a peculiar nature, in the affair of our salvation.

And thus it is that a truly Christian walk, and the acts of an evangelical, child-like, believing obedience, are concerned in the affair of our justification, and seem to be sometimes so spoken of in scripture, *viz.* as an expression of a persevering faith in the Son of God, the only Saviour. Faith unites to Christ, and so gives a congruity to justification, not merely as remaining a dormant principle in the heart, but as being and appearing in its active expressions. The obedience of a Christian, so far as it is truly evangelical, and performed with the Spirit of the Son sent forth into the heart, has all relation to Christ the Mediator, and is but an expression of the soul's believing unition to Christ. All evangelical works are works of that faith that worketh by love; and every such act of obedience, wherein it is inward, and the act of the soul, is only a new effective act of reception of Christ, and adherence to the glorious Saviour. Hence that of the apostle, Gal. ii. 20. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God." And hence we are directed, in whatever we do, whether in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Colos. iii. 17.

And that God in justification has respect, not only to the first act of faith, but also to future persevering acts, as expressed in life, seems manifest by Rom. i. 17. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." And Heb. x. 38, 39. "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul."

So that, as was before said of faith, so may it be said of a child-like believing obedience, it has no concern in justification by any virtue or excellency in it; but only as there is a reception of Christ in it. And this is no more contrary to the apostle's frequent assertion of our being justified without the works of the law, than to say that we are justified by faith; for faith is as much a work, or act of Christian obedience, as the expressions of faith, in spiritual life and walk. And therefore, as we say that faith does not justify as a work, so we say of all these effective expressions of faith.

This is the reverse of the scheme of our modern divines, who hold that faith justifies only as an act or expression of obedience; whereas, in truth, obedience has no concern in justification, any otherwise than as an expression of faith.

I now proceed to the

IV. Thing proposed, *viz.* To answer objections.

Object. 1. We frequently find promises of eternal life and salvation, and sometimes of justification itself, made to our own virtue and obedience. Eternal life is promised to obedience, in Rom. ii. 7. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life:" And the like in innumerable other places. And justification itself is promised to that virtue of a forgiving spirit or temper in us, Matt. vi. 14. "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." All allow that justification in great part consists in the forgiveness of sins.

To this I answer,

1. These things being promised to our virtue and obedience, argues no more, than that there is a connection between them and evangelical obedience; which, I have already observed, is not the thing in dispute. All that can be proved by obedience and salvation being connected in the promise, is, that obedience and salvation are connected in fact; which nobody denies; and whether it be owned or denied, is, as has been shewn, nothing to the purpose. There is no need that an admission to a title to salvation, should be given on the account of our obedience, in order to the promises being true. If we find such a promise, that he that obeys shall be saved, or he that is holy shall be justified, all that is needful, in order to such promises being true, is, that it be really so, that he that obeys shall be saved, and that holiness and justification shall indeed go together. That proposition may be a truth, that he that obeys shall be saved; because obedience and salvation are connected together in fact; and yet an acceptance to a title to salvation not be granted upon the account of any of our own virtue or obedience. What is a promise, but only a declaration of future truth, for the comfort and encouragement of the person to whom it is declared? Promises are conditional propositions; and, as has been already observed, it is not the thing in dispute, whether other things besides faith may not have the place of the condition in such propositions wherein pardon and salvation are the consequent.

2. Promises may rationally be made to signs and evidences of faith, and yet the thing promised not be upon the account of the sign, but the thing signified. Thus, for instance, human government may rationally make promises of such and such privileges to those that can shew such evidences of their being free of such a city,

or members of such a corporation, or descended of such a family; when it is not at all for the sake of that which is the evidence or sign, in itself considered, that they are admitted to such a privilege, but only and purely for the sake of that which it is an evidence of. And though God does not stand in need of signs to know whether we have true faith or not, yet our own consciences do; so that it is much for our comfort that promises are made to signs of faith. Finding in ourselves a forgiving temper and disposition, may be a most proper and natural evidence to our consciences, that our hearts have, in a sense of our own utter unworthiness, truly closed and fallen in with the way of free and infinitely gracious forgiveness of our sins by Jesus Christ; whence we may be enabled, with the greater comfort, to apply to ourselves the promises of forgiveness by Christ.

3. It has been just now shewn, how that acts of evangelical obedience are indeed concerned in our justification itself, and are not excluded from that condition that justification depends upon, without the least prejudice to that doctrine of justification by faith, without any goodness of our own, that has been maintained; and therefore it can be no objection against this doctrine, that we have sometimes in scripture promises of pardon and acceptance made to such acts of obedience.

4. Promises of particular benefits implied in justification and salvation, may especially be fitly made to such expressions and evidences of faith as they have a peculiar natural likeness and suitableness to. As forgiveness is promised to a forgiving spirit in us; obtaining mercy is fitly promised to mercifulness in us, and the like: and that upon several accounts, they are the most natural evidences of our heart's closing with those benefits by faith; for they do especially shew the sweet accord and consent that there is between the heart and these benefits; and by reason of the natural likeness that there is between the virtue and the benefit, the one has the greater tendency to bring the other to mind; the practice of the virtue tends the more to renew the sense, and refresh the hope of the blessing promised; and also to convince the conscience of the justice of being denied the benefit, if the duty be neglected. Besides the sense and manifestation of divine forgiveness in our own consciences—yea, and many exercises of God's forgiving mercy, (as it respects God's fatherly displeasure,) granted after justification, through the course of a Christian's life—may be given as the proper rewards of a forgiving spirit, and yet this not be at all to the prejudice of the doctrine we have maintained; as will more fully appear, when we come to answer another objection hereafter to be mentioned.

Object. 2. Our own obedience, and inherent holiness, is necessary to prepare men for heaven; and therefore is doubtless

what recommends persons to God's acceptance, as the heirs of heaven.

To this I answer,

1. Our own obedience being necessary, in order to a preparation for an actual bestowment of glory, is no argument that it is the thing upon the account of which we are accepted to a right to it. God may, and does do many things to prepare the saints for glory, after he has accepted them as the heirs of glory. A parent may do much to prepare a child for an inheritance in its education, after the child is an heir; yea, there are many things necessary to fit a child for the actual possession of the inheritance, yet not necessary in order to its having a right to the inheritance.

2. If every thing that is necessary to prepare men for glory must be the proper condition of justification, then perfect holiness is the condition of justification. Men must be made perfectly holy, before they are admitted to the enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven; for there must in no wise enter in there any spiritual defilement. And therefore, when a saint dies, he leaves all his sin and corruption when he leaves the body.

Object. 3. Our obedience is not only indissolubly connected with salvation, and preparatory to it, but the scripture expressly speaks of bestowing eternal blessings as rewards for the good deeds of the saints. Matt. x. 42. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward." 1 Cor. iii. 8. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." And in many other places. This seems to militate against the doctrine that has been maintained, two ways: (1.) The bestowing a reward, carries in it a respect to a moral fitness in the thing rewarded to the reward; the very notion of a reward being a benefit bestowed in testimony of acceptance of, and respect to, the goodness or amiableness of some qualification or work in the person rewarded. Besides, the scripture seems to explain itself in this matter, in Rev. iii. 4. "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." This is here given as the reason why they should have such a reward, "because they were worthy;" which, though we suppose it to imply no proper merit, yet it at least implies a moral fitness, or that the excellency of their virtue in God's sight recommends them to such a reward; which seems directly repugnant to what has been supposed, *viz.* that we are accepted, and approved of God, as the heirs of salvation, not out of regard to the excellency of our own virtue or goodness, or any moral fitness therein to such a reward, but only on account of the dignity and moral fitness of Christ's righteousness. (2.) Our being eternally

rewarded for our own holiness and good works, necessarily supposes that our future happiness will be greater or smaller, in some proportion as our own holiness and obedience is more or less; and that there are different degrees of glory, according to different degrees of virtue and good works, is a doctrine very expressly and frequently taught us in scripture. But this seems quite inconsistent with the saints' all having their future blessedness as a reward of Christ's righteousness: For if Christ's righteousness be imputed to all, and this be what entitles each one to glory, then it is the same righteousness that entitles one to glory which entitles another. But if all have glory as the reward of the same righteousness, why have not all the same glory? Does not the same righteousness merit as much glory when imputed to one as when imputed to another?

In answer to the *first* part of this objection, I would observe, that it does not argue that we are justified by our good deeds, that we shall have eternal blessings in reward for them; for it is in consequence of our justification, that our good deeds become rewardable with spiritual and eternal rewards. The acceptableness, and so the rewardableness of our virtue, is not antecedent to justification, but follows it, and is built entirely upon it; which is the reverse of what those in the adverse scheme of justification suppose, *viz.* that justification is built on the acceptableness and rewardableness of our virtue. They suppose that a saving interest in Christ is given as a reward of our virtue, or, (which is the same thing,) as a testimony of God's acceptance of our excellency in our virtue. But the contrary is true; that God's respect to our virtue as our amiableness in his sight, and his acceptance of it as rewardable, is entirely built on our interest in Christ already established. So that the relation to Christ, whereby believers in scripture language are said to be in Christ, is the very foundation of our virtues and good deeds being accepted of God, and so of their being rewarded; for a reward is a testimony of acceptance. For we, and all that we do, are accepted only in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Our sacrifices are acceptable, only through our interest in him, and through his worthiness and preciousness being, as it were, made ours. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Here being actually built on this stone, precious to God, is mentioned as all the ground of the acceptableness of our good works to God, and their becoming also precious in his eyes. So, Heb. xiii. 21. "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." And

hence are we directed, whatever we offer to God, to offer it in Christ's name, as expecting to have it accepted no other way, than from the value that God has to that name. Col. iii. 17. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." To act in Christ's name, is to act under him as our head, and as having him to stand for us, and represent us to God-ward.

The reason of this may be seen from what has been already said, to shew it is not meet that any thing in us should be accepted of God as any excellency of our persons, until we are actually in Christ, and justified through him. The loveliness of the virtue of fallen creatures is nothing in the sight of God, till he beholds them in Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. 1. Because till then we stand condemned before God, by his own holy law, to his utter rejection and abhorrence. And, 2. Because we are infinitely guilty before him; and the loveliness of our virtue bears no proportion to our guilt, and must therefore pass for nothing before a strict judge. And, 3. Because our good deeds and virtuous acts themselves are in a sense corrupt; and the hatefulness of the corruption of them, if we are beheld as we are in ourselves, or separate from Christ, infinitely outweighs the loveliness of the good that is in them. So that if no other sin was considered but only that which attends the act of virtue itself, the loveliness vanishes into nothing in comparison of it; and therefore the virtue must pass for nothing, out of Christ. Not only are our best duties defiled, in being attended with the exercises of sin and corruption which precede, follow, and are intermingled with them; but even the holy acts themselves, and the gracious exercises of the godly, are defective. Though the act most simply considered is good, yet take the acts in their measure and dimensions, and the manner in which they are exerted, and they are sinfully defective: there is that defect in them that may well be called the corruption of them. That defect is properly sin, an expression of a vile sinfulness of heart, and what tends to provoke the just anger of God: not because the exercise of love and other grace is not equal to God's loveliness, for it is impossible the love of creatures (men or angels) should be so, but because the act is so very disproportionate to the occasion given for love or other grace, considering God's loveliness, the manifestation that is made of it, the exercises of kindness, the capacity of human nature, and our advantages (and the like) together. A negative expression of corruption may be as truly sin, and as just cause of provocation, as a positive. Thus if a worthy and excellent person should, from mere generosity and goodness, exceedingly lay out himself, and with great expense and suffering save another's life, or redeem him from some extreme calamity; and if that other person should

never thank him for it, or express the least gratitude any way, this would be a negative expression of his ingratitude and baseness; but it is equivalent to an act of ingratitude, or positive exercise of a base unworthy spirit; and is truly an expression of it, and brings as much blame as if he by some positive act had much injured another person. And so it would be, (only in a lesser degree,) if the gratitude was but very small, bearing no proportion to the benefit and obligation: as if, for so great and extraordinary a kindness, he should express no more gratitude than would have been becoming towards a person who had only given him a cup of water when thirsty, or shewn him the way in a journey when at a loss, or had done him some such small kindness. If he should come to his benefactor to express his gratitude, and should do after this manner, he might truly be said to act unworthily and odiously; he would shew a most ungrateful spirit. His doing after such a manner might justly be abhorred by all; and yet the gratitude, that little there is of it, most simply considered, and so far as it goes, is good. And so it is with respect to our exercise of love, and gratitude, and other graces, towards God; they are defectively corrupt and sinful, and, take them as they are, in their manner and measure, might justly be odious and provoking to God, and would necessarily be so, were we beheld out of Christ. For in that this defect is sin, it is infinitely hateful; and so the hatefulness of the very act infinitely outweighs the loveliness of it; because all sin has infinite hatefulness and heinousness; but our holiness has but little value and loveliness, as has been elsewhere demonstrated.

Hence, though it be true that the saints are rewarded for their good works, yet it is for Christ's sake only, and not for the excellency of their works in themselves considered or beheld separately from Christ; for so they have no excellency in God's sight, or acceptableness to him, as has now been shewn. It is acknowledged that God, in rewarding the holiness and good works of believers, does in some respect give them happiness as a testimony of his respect to the loveliness of their holiness and good works in his sight; for that is the very notion of a reward. But it is in a very different sense from what would have been if man had not fallen; which would have been to bestow eternal life on man, as a testimony of God's respect to the loveliness of what man did, considered as in itself, and as in man separately by himself, and not beheld as a member of Christ. In which sense also, the scheme of justification we are opposing necessarily supposes the excellency of our virtue to be respected and rewarded; for it supposes a saving interest in Christ itself to be given as a reward of it.

Two things come to pass, relating to the saints' reward for their inherent righteousness, by virtue of their relation to Christ. 1. The guilt of their persons is all done away, and the pollution and hatefulness that attends and is in their good works, is hid.— 2. Their relation to Christ adds a positive value and dignity to their good works in God's sight. That little holiness, and those faint and feeble acts of love, and other grace, receive an exceeding value in the sight of God, by virtue of God's beholding them as in Christ, and as it were members of one so infinitely worthy in his eyes; and that because God looks upon the persons as of greater dignity on this account. Isa. xliii. 4. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable." God, for Christ's sake, and because they are members of his own righteous and dear Son, sets an exceeding value upon their persons; and hence it follows, that he also sets a great value upon their good acts and offerings. The same love and obedience in a person of greater dignity and value in God's sight, is more valuable in his eyes than in one of less dignity. Love is valuable in proportion to the dignity of the person whose love it is; because, so far as any one gives his love to another, he gives himself, in that he gives his heart. But this is a more excellent offering, in proportion as the person whose self is offered is more worthy. Believers are become immensely more honourable in God's esteem by virtue of their relation to Christ, than man would have been considered as by himself, though he had been free from sin; as a mean person becomes more honourable when married to a king. Hence God will probably reward the little weak love, and poor and exceeding imperfect obedience of believers in Christ, with more glorious reward than he would have done Adam's perfect obedience. According to the tenor of the first covenant, the person was to be accepted and rewarded, only for the work's sake; but by the covenant of grace, the work is accepted and rewarded, only for the person's sake: the person being beheld antecedently as a member of Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. So that though the saint's inherent holiness is rewarded, yet this very reward is indeed not the less founded on the worthiness and righteousness of Christ. None of the value that their works have in his sight, nor any of the acceptance they have with him, is out of Christ, and out of his righteousness; but his worthiness as mediator is the prime and only foundation on which all is built, and the universal source whence all arises. God indeed doth great things out of regard to the saints' loveliness, but it is only as a secondary and derivative loveliness. When I speak of a derivative loveliness, I do not mean only that the qualifications themselves accepted as lovely, are derived from Christ, from his power and

purchase, but that the acceptance of them as a loveliness, and all the value that is set upon them, and all their connection with the reward, is founded in, and derived from Christ's righteousness and worthiness.

If we suppose that not only higher degrees of glory in heaven, but heaven itself, is in some respect given in reward for the holiness and good works of the saints, in this secondary and derivative sense, it will not prejudice the doctrine we have maintained. It is no way impossible that God may bestow heaven's glory wholly out of respect to Christ's righteousness, and yet in reward for man's inherent holiness, in different respects, and different ways. It may be only Christ's righteousness that God has respect to, for its own sake, the independent acceptableness and dignity of it being sufficient of itself to recommend all that believe in Christ to a title to this glory; and so it may be only by this that persons enter into a title to heaven, or have their prime right to it; and yet God may also have respect to the saints' own holiness, for Christ's sake, and as deriving a value from Christ's merit, which he may testify in bestowing heaven upon them. The saints being beheld as members of Christ, their obedience is looked upon by God as something of Christ's, it being the obedience of the members of Christ; as the sufferings of the members of Christ are looked upon, in some respect, as the sufferings of Christ. Hence the apostle, speaking of his suffering, says, Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." To the same purpose in Matt. xxv. 35, &c. "I was an hungered, naked, sick, and in prison," &c. And so that in Rev. xi. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

By the merit and righteousness of Christ, such favour of God towards the believer may be obtained, as that God may hereby be already, as it were, disposed to make them perfectly and eternally happy. But yet this does not hinder, but that God in his wisdom may choose to bestow this perfect and eternal happiness in this way, *viz.* in some respect as a reward of their holiness and obedience. It is not impossible but that the blessedness may be bestowed as a reward for that which is done after that an interest is already obtained in that favour, which (to speak of God after the manner of men) disposes God to bestow the blessedness. Our heavenly Father may already have that favour for a child, whereby he may be thoroughly ready to give the child an inheritance, because he is his child; which he is by the purchase of Christ's righteousness: and yet that the Father may choose to bestow the inheritance on the child in a way of reward for his dutiful-

ness, and behaving in a manner becoming a child. And so great a reward may not be judged more than a meet reward for his dutifulness; but that so great a reward is judged meet, does not arise from the excellency of the obedience absolutely considered, but from his standing in so near and honourable a relation to God, as that of a child, which is obtained only by the righteousness of Christ. And thus the reward, and the greatness of it, arises properly from the righteousness of Christ; though it be indeed in some sort the reward of their obedience. As a father might justly esteem the inheritance no more than a meet reward for the obedience of his child, and yet esteem it more than a meet reward for the obedience of a servant. The favour whence a believer's heavenly Father bestows the eternal inheritance, and his title as an heir, is founded in that relation he stands in to him as a child, purchased by Christ's righteousness; though he in wisdom chooses to bestow it in such a way, and therein to testify his acceptance of the amiableness of his obedience in Christ.

Believers having a title to heaven by faith antecedent to their obedience, or its being absolutely promised to them before, does not hinder but that the actual bestowment of heaven may also be a testimony of God's regard to their obedience, though performed afterwards. Thus it was with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers: God bestowed upon him that blessing of multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, and causing that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, in reward for his obedience in offering up his son Isaac. Gen. xxii. 16—18. "And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." And yet the very same blessings had been from time to time promised to Abraham, in the most positive terms, and the promise, with great solemnity, confirmed and sealed to him; as chap. xii. 2, 3. chap. xiii. 16. chap. xv. 1, 4—7, &c.; chap. xvii. throughout; chap. xviii. 10, 18.

From what has been said we may easily solve the difficulty arising from that text in Rev. iii. 4. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy;" which is parallel with that text in Luke xx. 35. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." I allow (as in the objection) that this worthiness does doubtless denote a moral fitness to the reward, or that God looks on these glorious bene-

fits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons and performances have in his sight.

1. God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons have in his sight. But he sets this value upon their persons purely for Christ's sake. They are such jewels, and have such preciousness in his eyes, only because they are beheld in Christ, and by reason of the worthiness of the head they are the members of, and the stock they are grafted into. And the value that God sets upon them on this account is so great, that God thinks meet, from regard to it, to admit them to such exceeding glory. The saints, on account of their relation to Christ, are such precious jewels in God's sight, that they are thought worthy of a place in his own crown. Mal. iii. 17. Zech. ix. 16. So far as the saints are said to be valuable in God's sight, on whatever account, so far may they properly be said to be worthy, or meet for that honour which is answerable to the value or price which God sets upon them. A child or wife of a prince is worthy to be treated with great honour; and therefore if a mean person should be adopted to be a child of a prince, or should be espoused to a prince, it would be proper to say, that she was worthy of such and such honour and respect, and there would be no force upon the words in saying, that she ought to have such respect paid her, for she is worthy, though it be only on account of her relation to the prince that she is so.

2. From the value God sets upon their persons, for the sake of Christ's worthiness, he also sets a high value on their virtue and performances. Their meek and quiet spirit is of great price in his sight. Their fruits are pleasant fruits, their offerings are an odour of sweet smell to him; and that because of the value he sets on their persons, as has been already observed and explained. This preciousness or high-valuableness of believers is a moral fitness to a reward; and yet this valuableness is all in the righteousness of Christ, that is the foundation of it. The thing respected is not excellency in them separately by themselves, or in their virtue by itself, but the value in God's account arises from other considerations; which is the natural import of Luke xx. 35. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world," &c. and Luke xxi. 36. "That ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." 2 Thess. i. 5. "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer."

There is a vast difference between this scheme, and what is supposed in the scheme of those that oppose the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This lays the foundation of first acceptance with God, and all actual salvation consequent upon it, wholly in Christ and his righteousness. On the contrary, in their

scheme, a regard to man's own excellency or virtue is supposed to be first, and to have the place of the first foundation in actual salvation, though not in that ineffectual redemption, which they suppose common to all. They lay the foundation of all discriminating salvation in man's own virtue and moral excellency. This is the very bottom stone in this affair; for they suppose that it is from regard to our virtue, that even a special interest in Christ itself is given. The foundation being thus contrary, the whole scheme becomes exceeding diverse and contrary; the one is an evangelical scheme, the other a legal one; the one is utterly inconsistent with our being justified by Christ's righteousness, the other not at all.

From what has been said, we may understand, not only how the forgiveness of sin granted in justification is indissolubly connected with a forgiving spirit in us, but how there may be many exercises of forgiving mercy granted in reward for our forgiving those who trespass against us. For none will deny but that there are many acts of divine forgiveness towards the saints, that do not presuppose an unjustified state immediately preceding that forgiveness. None will deny, that saints who never fell from a justified state, yet commit many sins which God forgives afterwards, by laying aside his fatherly displeasure. This forgiveness may be in reward for our forgiveness, without any prejudice to the doctrine that has been maintained, as well as other mercies and blessings consequent on justification.

With respect to the *second* part of the objection, that relates to the different degrees of glory, and the seeming inconsistence there is in it, that the degrees of glory in different saints should be greater or lesser according to their inherent holiness and good works, and yet, that every one's glory should be purchased with the price of the very same imputed righteousness,—I answer, That Christ, by his righteousness, purchased for every one complete and perfect happiness, according to his capacity. But this does not hinder but that the saints, being of various capacities, may have various degrees of happiness, and yet all their happiness be the fruit of Christ's purchase. Indeed it cannot be properly said that Christ purchased any particular degree of happiness, so that the value of Christ's righteousness in the sight of God, is sufficient to raise a believer so high in happiness, and no higher, and so that if the believer were made happier, it would exceed the value of Christ's righteousness; but in general, Christ purchased eternal life, or perfect happiness for all, according to their several capacities. The saints are as so many vessels of different sizes, cast into a sea of happiness, where every vessel is full; this Christ purchased for all. But after all, it is left to God's sovereign pleasure to determine the largeness of the ves-

sel; Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter. Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6, 7. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism," &c.—"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." God may dispense in this matter according to what rule he pleases, not the less for what Christ has done: He may dispense either without condition, or upon what condition he pleases to fix. It is evident that Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter; for what Christ did was to fulfil the covenant of works; but the covenant of works did not meddle at all with this. If Adam had persevered in perfect obedience, he and his posterity would have had perfect and full happiness; every one's happiness would have so answered his capacity, that he would have been completely blessed; but God would have been at liberty to have made some of one capacity, and others of another, as he pleased.—The angels have obtained eternal life, or a state of confirmed glory, by a covenant of works, whose condition was perfect obedience; but yet some are higher in glory than others, according to the several capacities that God, according to his sovereign pleasure, hath given them. So that it being still left with God, notwithstanding the perfect obedience of the second Adam, to fix the degree of each one's capacity by what rule he pleases, he hath been pleased to fix the degree of capacity, and so of glory, by the proportion of the saints' grace and fruitfulness here. He gives higher degrees of glory in reward for higher degrees of holiness and good works, because it pleases him; and yet all the happiness of each saint is indeed the fruit of the purchase of Christ's obedience. If it had been but one man that Christ had obeyed and died for, and it had pleased God to make him of a very large capacity, Christ's perfect obedience would have purchased that his capacity should be filled, and then all his happiness might properly be said to be the fruit of Christ's perfect obedience; though, if he had been of a less capacity, he would not have had so much happiness by the same obedience; and yet would have had as much as Christ merited for him. Christ's righteousness meddles not with the degree of happiness, any otherwise than as he merits that it should be full and perfect, according to the capacity: And so it may be said to be concerned in the degree of happiness, as perfect is a degree with respect to imperfect; but it meddles not with degrees of perfect happiness.

This matter may be yet better understood, if we consider that Christ and the whole church of saints are, as it were, one body, of which he is the head, and they members, of different place and capacity: Now the whole body, head and members, have communion in Christ's righteousness; they are all partakers of the

benefit of it; Christ himself the head is rewarded for it, and every member is partaker of the benefit and reward. But it does by no means follow, that every part should equally partake of the benefit, but every part in proportion to its place and capacity; the head partakes of far more than other parts, and the more noble members partake of more than the inferior. As it is in a natural body that enjoys perfect health, the head, and the heart, and lungs, have a greater share of this health, they have it more seated in them, than the hands and feet, because they are parts of greater capacity; though the hands and feet are as much in perfect health as those nobler parts of the body. So it is in the mystical body of Christ, all the members are partakers of the benefit of the head; but it is according to the different capacity and place they have in the body; and God determines that place and capacity as he pleases; he makes whom he pleases the foot, and whom he pleases the hand, and whom he pleases the lungs, &c. 1 Cor. xii. 18. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." God efficaciously determines the place and capacity of every member, by the different degrees of grace and assistance in the improvement of it in this world. Those that he intends for the highest place in the body, he gives them most of his Spirit, the greatest share of the divine nature, the spirit and nature of Christ Jesus the head, and that assistance whereby they perform the most excellent works, and do most abound in them.

Object. 4. It may be objected against what has been supposed, (*viz.* That rewards are given to our good works, only in consequence of an interest in Christ, or in testimony of God's respect to the excellency or value of them in his sight, as built on an interest in Christ's righteousness already obtained,)—that the scripture speaks of an interest in Christ itself, as being given out of respect to our moral fitness. Matth. x. 37—39. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: He that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me: He that findeth his life, shall lose it," &c. Worthiness here at least signifies a moral fitness, or an excellency that recommends: And this place seems to intimate as though it were from respect to a moral fitness that men are admitted even to an union with Christ, and interest in him; and therefore this worthiness cannot be consequent on being in Christ, and by the imputation of his worthiness, or from any value that is in us, or in our actions in God's sight, as beheld in Christ.

To this I *answer*, That though persons when they are *accepted*, are not accepted as *worthy*, yet when they are *rejected*, they are rejected as *unworthy*. He that does not love Christ above other

things, but treats him with such indignity, as to set him below earthly things, shall be treated as unworthy of Christ; his unworthiness of Christ, especially in that particular, shall be marked against him, and imputed to him. And though he be a professing Christian, and live in the enjoyment of the gospel, and has been visibly ingrafted into Christ, and admitted as one of his disciples, as Judas was; yet he shall be thrust out in wrath, as a punishment of his vile treatment of Christ. The forementioned words do not imply, that if a man does love Christ above father and mother, &c. that he would be *worthy;* the most they imply is, that such a visible Christian shall be treated and thrust out as unworthy. He that believes is not received for the worthiness or moral fitness of faith; but yet the visible Christian is cast out by God, for the unworthiness and moral unfitness of unbelief. A being accepted as one of Christ's, is not the reward of believing; but being thrust out from being one of Christ's disciples, after a visible admission as such, is properly a punishment of unbelief. John iii. 18, 19. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Salvation is promised to faith as a free gift, but damnation is threatened to unbelief as a debt, or punishment due to unbelief. They who believed while in the wilderness, did not enter into Canaan, because of the worthiness of their faith; but God sware in his wrath, that they that believed should not enter in because of the unworthiness of their unbelief. Admitting a soul to an union with Christ is an act of free and sovereign grace; but excluding at death, and at the day of judgment, those professors of Christianity who have had the offers of a Saviour, and enjoyed great privileges as God's people, is a judicial proceeding, and a just punishment of their unworthy treatment of Christ. The design of this saying of Christ is to make them sensible of the unworthiness of their treatment of Christ, who professed him to be their Lord and Saviour, and set him below father and mother, &c. and not to shew the worthiness of loving him above father and mother. If a beggar should be offered any great and precious gift, but as soon as offered, should trample it under his feet, it might be taken from him, as unworthy to have it. Or if a malefactor should have his pardon offered him, that he might be freed from execution, and should only scoff at it, his pardon might be refused him, as unworthy of it; though if he had received it, he would not have had it for his worthiness, or as being recommended to it by his virtue; for his being a malefactor supposes him [illegible]y, and its being offered him to have it only on ac-

cepting, supposes that the king looks for no worthiness, nothing in him for which he should bestow pardon as a reward. This may teach us how to understand Acts xiii. 46. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

Object. 5. It is objected against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, That repentance is evidently spoken of in scripture as that which is in a special manner the condition of remission of sins: but remission of sins is by all allowed to be that wherein justification does (at least) in great part consist.

But it must certainly arise from a misunderstanding of what the scripture says about repentance, to suppose that faith and repentance are two distinct things, that in like manner are the conditions of justification. For it is most plain from the scripture, that the condition of justification, or that in us by which we are justified, is but one, and that is faith. Faith and repentance are not two distinct conditions of justification, nor are they two distinct things that together make one condition of justification; but faith comprehends the whole of that by which we are justified, or by which we come to have an interest in Christ, and there is nothing else has a parallel concern with it in the affair of our salvation. And this the divines on the other side themselves are sensible of, and therefore they suppose that the faith the apostle Paul speaks of, which he says we are justified by alone, comprehends in it repentance.

And therefore, in answer to the objection, I would say, that when repentance is spoken of in scripture as the condition of pardon, thereby is not intended any particular grace, or act, properly distinct from faith, that has a parallel influence with it in the affair of our pardon or justification; but by repentance is intended nothing distinct from active conversion, (or conversion actively considered,) as it respects the term from which. Active conversion is a motion or exercise of the mind that respects two terms, *viz.* sin and God: and by repentance is meant this conversion, or active change of the mind, so far as it is conversant about the term from which, or about sin. This is what the word *repentance* properly signifies; which, in the original of the New Testament, is μετανοια, and signifies *a change of the mind*, or, which is the same thing, the turning or the conversion of the mind. Repentance is this turning, as it respects what is turned from. Acts, xxvi. 20.—"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I shewed unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God." Both these are the same turning, but only with respect to opposite terms; in the former is expressed the exercise of mind about sin

in this turning; in the other, the exercise of mind towards God.

If we look over the scriptures that speak of evangelical repentance, we shall presently see that repentance is to be understood in this sense; as Matth. ix. 13. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Luke xiii. 3. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And chap. xv. 7, 10. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," *i. e.* over one sinner that is converted. Acts xi. 18. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." This is said by the Christians of the circumcision at Jerusalem, upon Peter's giving an account of the conversion of Cornelius and his family, and their embracing the gospel, though Peter had said nothing expressly about their sorrow for sin. And again, Acts xvii. 30. "But now commandeth all men every where to repent." And Luke xvi. 30. "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they would repent." 2 Pet. iii. 9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is plain that in these and other places, by repentance is meant conversion.

Now it is true, that conversion is the condition of pardon and justification: but if it be so, how absurd is it to say, that conversion is one condition of justification, and faith another, as though they were two distributively distinct and parallel conditions? Conversion is the condition of justification, because it is that great change by which we are brought from sin to Christ, and by which we become believers in him: agreeable to Matt. xxi. 32. "And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." When we are directed to repent, that our sins may be blotted out, it is as much as to say, let your minds and hearts be changed, that your sins may be blotted out. But if it be said, let your hearts be changed, that you may be justified; and believe, that you may be justified; does it therefore follow, that the heart being changed is one condition of justification, and believing another? But our minds must be changed, that we may believe, and so may be justified.

And besides, evangelical repentance, being active conversion, is not to be treated of as a particular grace, properly and entirely distinct from faith, as by some it seems to have been. What is conversion, but the sinful, alienated soul's closing with Christ, or the sinner's being brought to believe in Christ? That exercise of soul in conversion that respects sin, cannot be excluded out of the nature of faith in Christ: there is something in faith, or closing with Christ, that respects sin, and that is evangelical repent-

ance. That repentance which in scripture is called, repentance for the remission of sins, is that very principle or operation of the mind itself that is called faith, so far as it is conversant about sin. Justifying faith in a Mediator is conversant about two things: it is conversant about sin or evil to be rejected and to be delivered from, and about positive good to be accepted and obtained by the Mediator; as conversant about the former of these, it is evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins. Surely they must be very ignorant, or at least very inconsiderate, of the whole tenor of the gospel, who think that the repentance by which remission of sins is obtained, can be completed as to all that is essential to it, without any respect to Christ, or application of the mind to the Mediator, who alone has made atonement for sin.—Surely so great a part of salvation as remission of sins, is not to be obtained without looking or coming to the great and only Saviour. It is true, repentance, in its more general abstracted nature, is only a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it, which is a duty of natural religion; but evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins, hath more than this essential to it; a dependence of soul on the Mediator for deliverance from sin, is of the essence of it.

That justifying repentance has the nature of faith, seems evident by Acts xix. 4. "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." The latter words, "saying unto the people, that they should believe on him," &c. are evidently exegetical of the former, and explain how he preached repentance for the remission of sins. When it is said, that he preached repentance for the remission of sin, saying that they should believe on Christ, it cannot be supposed but that his saying, that they should believe on Christ, was intended as directing them what to do that they might obtain the remission of sins. So, 2 Tim. ii. 25. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." That acknowledging of the truth which there is in believing, is here spoken of as what is attained in repentance. And on the other hand, that faith includes repentance in its nature, is evident by the apostle's speaking of sin as destroyed in faith, Gal. ii. 18.—In the preceding verses the apostle mentions an objection against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, *viz.* that it tends to encourage men in sin, and so to make Christ the minister of sin. This objection he rejects and refutes with this, "If I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." If sin be destroyed by faith, it must be by repentance of sin included in it;

for we know that it is our repentance of sin, or the μετανοια, or turning of the mind from sin, that is our destroying our sin.

That in justifying faith which directly respects sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator, is as follows: a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and a hearty acknowledgment of its desert of the threatened punishment, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it and its punishment.

Concerning this, here described, three things may be noted: 1. That it is the very same with that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised in scripture. 2. That it is of the essence of justifying faith, and is the same with that faith, so far as it is conversant about evil to be delivered from by the Mediator. 3. That this is indeed the proper and peculiar condition of remission of sins.

1. All of it is essential to evangelical repentance, and is indeed the very thing meant by that repentance, to which remission of sins is promised in the gospel. As to the former part of the description, *viz.* a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and a hearty acknowledgment of its desert of wrath, none will deny it to be included in repentance: but this does not comprehend the whole essence of evangelical repentance; but what follows does also properly and essentially belong to its nature, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it, and the punishment of it. That repentance to which remission is promised, not only always has this with it, but it is contained in it, as what is of the proper nature and essence of it: and respect is ever had to this in the nature of repentance, whenever remission is promised to it; and it is especially from respect to this in the nature of repentance, that it has that promise made to it. If this latter part be missing, it fails of the nature of that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised. If repentance remains in sorrow for sin, and does not reach to a looking to the free mercy of God in Christ for pardon, it is not that which is the condition of pardon, neither shall pardon be obtained by it. Evangelical repentance is an humiliation for sin before God: but the sinner never comes and humbles himself before God in any other repentance, but that which includes hoping in his mercy for remission: If sorrow be not accompanied with that, there will be no coming to God in it, but a flying further from him. There is some worship of God in justifying repentance; but that is not in any other repentance which has not a sense of, and faith in the divine mercy to forgive sin; Psalm cxxx. 4. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." The promise of mercy to a true penitent, in Prov. xxviii. 13. is expressed in these terms, "Whoso confesseth and

forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy." But there is faith in God's mercy in that confessing. The Psalmist, (Psalm xxxii.) speaking of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven—and whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputes not sin—says, that while he kept silence his bones waxed old; but he acknowledged his sin unto God, his iniquity he did not hide; he said, he would confess his transgression to the Lord, and then God forgave the iniquity of his sin. The manner of expression plainly holds forth, that *then* he began to encourage himself in the mercy of God, but his bones waxed old while he kept silence; and therefore, the apostle Paul, in the 4th of Romans, brings this instance, to confirm the doctrine of justification by faith alone, that he had been insisting on. When sin is aright confessed to God, there is always faith in that act. That confessing of sin which is joined with despair, as in Judas, is not the confession to which the promise is made. In Acts ii. 38. the direction given to those who were pricked in their heart with a sense of the guilt of sin, was to repent, and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. Being baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, implied faith in Christ for the remission of sins. Repentance for the remission of sins was typified of old by the priest's confessing the sins of the people over the scape-goat, laying his hands on him, Lev. xvi. 21. denoting it as that repentance and confession of sin only that obtains remission, which is made over Christ the great sacrifice, and with dependence on him. Many other things might be produced from the scripture, that in like manner confirm this point; but these may be sufficient.

2. All the forementioned description is of the essence of justifying faith, and not different from it, so far as it is conversant about sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator. For it is doubtless of the essence of justifying faith, to embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin and its punishment; and all that is contained in that act is contained in the nature of faith itself. But in the act of embracing Christ as a Saviour from our sin and its punishment, is implied a sense of our sinfulness, and an hatred of our sins, or a rejecting them with abhorrence, and a sense of our desert of punishment. Embracing Christ as a Saviour from sin, implies the contrary act, *viz.* rejecting sin. If we fly to the light to be delivered from darkness, the same act is contrary to darkness, *viz.* a rejecting of it. In proportion to the earnestness with which we embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin, in the same proportion is the abhorrence with which we reject sin, in the same act. Yea, suppose there be in the nature of faith, as conversant about sin, no more than the hearty embracing of Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of sin, this act will imply in it the

whole of the abovementioned description. It implies a sense of our own sinfulness. Certainly in the hearty embracing of a Saviour from the punishment of our sinfulness, there is the exercise of a sense that we are sinful. We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of that which we are not sensible we are guilty of. There is also in the same act, a sense of our desert of the threatened punishment. We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from that which we are not sensible that we have deserved. For if we are not sensible that we have deserved the punishment, we shall not be sensible that we have any need of a Saviour from it, or, at least, shall not be convinced but that God who offers the Saviour, unjustly makes him needful; and we cannot heartily embrace such an offer. And further, there is implied in a hearty embracing Christ as a Saviour from punishment, not only a conviction of conscience, that we have deserved the punishment, such as the devils and damned have, but there is a hearty acknowledgment of it, with the submission of the soul, so as, with the accord of the heart, to own that God might be just in the punishment. If the heart rises against the act or judgment of God, in holding us obliged to the punishment, when he offers us his Son as a Saviour from the punishment, we cannot with the consent of the heart receive him in that character: But if persons thus submit to the righteousness of so dreadful a punishment of sin, this carries in it an hatred of sin.

That such a sense of our sinfulness, and utter unworthiness, and desert of punishment, belongs to the nature of saving faith, is what the scripture from time to time holds forth; as particularly in Matt. xv. 26—28. "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith." And Luke vii. 6—9. "The centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed: for I also am a man set under authority," &c.—"When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And also ver. 37, 38. "And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them

with the ointment." Together with ver. 50. "He said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

These things do not necessarily suppose that repentance and faith are words of just the same signification; for it is only so much in justifying faith as respects the evil to be delivered from by the Saviour, that is called repentance. Besides, both repentance and faith, take them only in their general nature, are entirely distinct; repentance is a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it; and faith is a trusting in God's sufficiency and truth. But faith and repentance, as *evangelical* duties, or justifying faith, and repentance for remission of sins, contain more in them, and imply a respect to a mediator, and involve each other's nature*; though they still bear the name of faith and repentance, from those general moral virtues—that repentance, which is a duty of natural religion, and that faith, which was a duty required under the first covenant—that are contained in this evangelical act; which severally appear, when this act is considered with respect to its different terms and objects.

It may be objected here, that the scripture sometimes mentions faith and repentance together, as if they were entirely distinct things; as in Mark i. 15. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." But there is no need of understanding these as two distinct conditions of salvation, but the words are exegetical one of another. It is to teach us after what manner we must repent, *viz.* as believing the gospel, and after what manner we must believe the gospel, *viz.* as repenting. These words no more prove faith and repentance to be entirely distinct, than those forementioned. Matth. xxi. 32. "And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." Or those, 2 Tim. ii. 25. "If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." The apostle, in Acts xix. 4. seems to have reference to these words of John the Baptist, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe," &c. where the latter words, as we have already observed, are to explain how he preached repentance.

Another scripture, where faith and repentance are mentioned together, is Acts xx. 21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." It may be objected, that in this place, faith and repentance are not only spoken of as distinct things, but having distinct objects.

* Agreeable to this, is what Mr. Locke says in his second *Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. vol. ii. of his works, p. 630, 631. "The believing him therefore, to be the Messiah, is very often, with great reason, put both for faith and repentance too, which are sometimes set down singly, where one is put for both, as implying the other."

To this I answer, That faith and repentance, in their general nature, are distinct things: And repentance for the remission of sins, or that in justifying faith that respects the evil to be delivered from, so far as it regards that term, which is what especially denominates it repentance, has respect to God as the object, because he is the Being offended by sin, and to be reconciled, but that in this justifying act, whence it is denominated faith, does more especially respect Christ. But let us interpret it how we will, the objection of faith being here so distinguished from repentance, is as much of an objection against the scheme of those that oppose justification by faith alone, as against this scheme; for they hold that the justifying faith the apostle Paul speaks of, includes repentance, as has been already observed.

3. This repentance that has been described, is indeed the special condition of remission of sins. This seems very evident by the scripture, as particularly, Mark i. 4. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins." So, Luke iii. 3. "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Luke xxiv. 47. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Chap. ii. 38. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." And, chap. iii. 19. "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." The like is evident by Lev. xxvi. 40—42; Job xxxiii. 27, 28; Psalm xxxii. 5; Prov. xxviii. 13; Jer. iii. 13; and 1 John i. 9; and other places.

And the reason may be plain from what has been said. We need not wonder that what in faith especially respects sin, should be especially the condition of remission of sins; or that this motion or exercise of the soul, as it rejects and flies from evil, and embraces Christ as a Saviour from it, should especially be the condition of being free from that evil; in like manner, as the same principle or motion, as it seeks good, and cleaves to Christ as the procurer of that good, should be the condition of obtaining that good. Faith with respect to good is accepting, and with respect to evil it is rejecting. Yea, this rejecting evil is itself an act of acceptance; it is accepting freedom or separation from that evil; and this freedom or separation is the benefit bestowed in remission. No wonder that what in faith immediately respects this benefit, and is our acceptance of it, should be the special condition of our having it. It is so with respect to all the benefits that Christ has purchased. Trusting in God through Christ for such

a particular benefit that we need, is the special condition of obtaining that benefit. When we need protection from enemies, the exercise of faith with respect to such a benefit, or trusting in Christ for protection from enemies, is especially the way to obtain that particular benefit, rather than trusting in Christ for something else; and so of any other benefit that might be mentioned. So prayer (which is the expression of faith) for a particular mercy needed, is especially the way to obtain that mercy*. So that no argument can be drawn from hence against the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And there is that in the nature of repentance, which peculiarly tends to establish the contrary of justification by works: for nothing so much renounces our own worthiness and excellency, as repentance; the very nature of it is to acknowledge our own utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and to renounce our own goodness, and all confidence in self; and so to trust in the propitiation of the Mediator, and ascribe all the glory of forgiveness to him.

Object. 6. The last objection I shall mention, is that paragraph in the 3d chapter of James, where persons are said expressly to be justified by works; verse 21. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works?" Verse 24. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Verse 25. "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works?"

In answer to this objection, I would

1. Take notice of the great unfairness of the divines that oppose us, in the improvement they make of this passage against us. All will allow, that in that proposition of St. James, "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only, one of the terms, either the word *faith*, or else the word *justify*, is not to be understood precisely in the same sense as the same terms when used by St. Paul; because they suppose, as well as we, that it was not the intent of the apostle James to contradict St. Paul in that doctrine of justification by faith alone, in which he had instructed the churches. But if we understand both the terms, as used by each apostle, in precisely the same sense, then what one asserts is precise, direct, and full contradiction of the other, the one affirming and the other denying the very same thing. So that all the controversy from this text comes to this, *viz.* which of these two terms shall be understood in a diversity from St. Paul. They say that it is the word *faith;* for they suppose, that when the apostle Paul uses the word, and makes faith that by which alone we are justifi-

* If repentance justifies, or be that by which we obtain pardon of sin any other way than this, it must be either as a virtue or righteousness, or something amiable in us; or else it must be, that our sorrow and condemning what is past, is accepted as some atonement for it; both which are equally contrary to the gospel-doctrine of justification by Christ.

ed, that then by it is understood a compliance with, and practice of Christianity in general; so as to include all saving Christian virtue and obedience. But as the apostle James uses the word faith in this place, they suppose thereby is to be understood only an assent of the understanding to the truth of gospel doctrines, as distinguished from good works, and that may exist separate from them, and from all saving grace. We, on the other hand, suppose that the word *justify* is to be understood in a different sense from the apostle Paul. So that they are forced to go as far in their scheme, in altering the sense of terms from Paul's use of them, as we. But yet at the same time that they freely vary the sense of the former of them, *viz.* faith, yet when we understand the latter, *viz.* justify, in a different sense from St. Paul, they exclaim against us. What necessity of framing this distinction, but only to serve an opinion? At this rate a man may maintain any thing, though never so contrary to scripture, and elude the clearest text in the Bible! though they do not shew us why we have not as good warrant to understand the word *justify* in a diversity from St. Paul, as they the word *faith*. If the sense of one of the words must be varied on either scheme, to make the apostle James's doctrine consistent with the apostle Paul's; and if varying the sense of one term or the other be all that stands in the way of their agreeing with either scheme; and if varying the sense of the latter be in itself as fair as of the former, then the text lies as fair for one scheme as the other, and can no more fairly be an objection against our scheme than theirs. And if so, what becomes of all this great objection from this passage in James?

2. If there be no more difficulty in varying the sense of one of these terms than another, from any thing in the text itself, so as to make the words suit with either scheme, then certainly that is to be chosen that is most agreeable to the current of scripture, and other places where the same matter is more particularly and fully treated of; and therefore that we should understand the word *justify* in this passage of James, in a sense in some respect diverse from that in which St. Paul uses it. For by what has been already said, it may appear, that there is no one doctrine in the whole Bible more fully asserted, explained, and urged, than the doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any of our own righteousness.

3. There is a very fair interpretation of this passage of St. James, no way inconsistent with this doctrine of justification, which I have shewn that other scriptures abundantly teach, which the words themselves will as well allow of, as that which the objectors put upon them, and much better agrees with the context; and that is, that works are here spoken of as justifying as evidences. A man may be said to be justified by that which clears him, or vin-

dicates him, or makes the goodness of his cause manifest. When a person has a cause tried in a civil court, and is justified or cleared, he may be said in different senses to be justified or cleared, by the goodness of his cause, and by the goodness of the evidences of it. He may be said to be cleared by what evidences his cause to be good; but not in the same sense as he is by that which makes his cause to be good. That which renders his cause good, is the proper ground of his justification; it is by that that he is himself a proper subject of it; but evidences justify, only as they manifest that his cause is good in fact, whether they are of such a nature as to have any influence to render it so, or no. It is by works that our cause appears to be good; but by faith our cause not only appears to be good, but becomes good; because thereby we are united to Christ. That the word *justify* should be sometimes understood to signify the former of these, as well as the latter, is agreeable to the use of the word in common speech; as we say such an one stood up to justify another, *i. e.* he endeavoured to shew or manifest his cause to be good. And it is certain that the word is sometimes used in this sense in scripture, when speaking of our being justified before God; as where it is said, we shall be justified by our words, Matt. xii. 37. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." It cannot be meant that men are accepted before God on the account of their words; for God has told us nothing more plainly, than that it is the heart that he looks at; and that when he acts as judge towards men in order to justifying or condemning, he tries the heart. Jer. xi. 20. "But, O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my cause." Psal. vii. 8, 9. "The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." Ver. 11. "God judgeth the righteous." And many other places to the like purpose. And therefore men can be justified by their words, no otherwise than as evidences or manifestations of what is in the heart. And it is thus that Christ speaks of words in this very place, as is evident by the context, ver. 34, 35. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart," &c. The words, or sounds themselves, are neither parts of godliness, nor evidences of godliness, but as signs of what is inward.

God himself, when he acts towards men as judge, in order to a declarative judgment, makes use of evidences, and so judges men by their works. And therefore, at the day of judgment, God will judge men according to their works: For though God will stand

in no need of evidence to inform him what is right, yet it is to be considered, that he will then sit in judgment, not as earthly judges do, to find out what is right in a cause, but to declare and manifest what is right: and therefore that day is called by the apostle, "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5.

To be justified, is to be approved of and accepted: But a man may be said to be approved and accepted in two respects; the one is to be approved really, and the other to be approved and accepted declaratively. Justification is two-fold; it is either the acceptance and approbation of the judge itself, or the manifestation of that approbation, by a sentence or judgment declared by the judge, either to our own consciences, or to the world. If justification be understood in the former sense, for the approbation itself, that is only that by which we become fit to be approved: But if it be understood in the latter sense, for the manifestation of this approbation, it is by whatever is a proper evidence of that fitness. In the former, only faith is concerned; because it is by that only in us that we become fit to be accepted and approved: In the latter, whatever is an evidence of our fitness, is alike concerned. And therefore, take justification in this sense, and then faith, and all other graces and good works, have a common and equal concern in it: For any other grace, or holy act, is equally an evidence of a qualification for acceptance or approbation, as faith.

To justify has always, in common speech, signified indifferently, either simply approbation, or testifying that approbation; sometimes one, and sometimes the other; because they are both the same, only as one is outwardly what the other is inwardly. So we, and it may be all nations, are wont to give the same names to two things, when one is only declarative of the other. Thus sometimes judging, intends only judging in our thoughts; at other times, testifying and declaring judgment. So such words as justify, condemn, accept, reject, prize, slight, approve, renounce, are sometimes put for mental acts, at other times, for an outward treatment. So in the sense in which the apostle James seems to use the word *justify*, for *manifestative justification*, a man is justified not only by *faith*, but also by *works;* as a tree is manifested to be good, not only by immediately examining the tree, but also by the fruit*, Prov. xx. 11. "Even a child is known by his doing, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."

* This distinction is just and scriptural as far as it goes, but it does not reach the bottom of the difficulty, since believing in order to justification is itself a part of obedience, and is expressly called "the obedience of faith." Hence justification by faith, in comparison of what precedes it, is only manifestative. The tree must be good, that is, the person must be vitally united to Christ, as the adequate cause

The drift of the apostle does not require that he should be understood in any other sense: For all that he aims at, as appears by a view of the context, is to prove that good works are necessary. The error of those that he opposed was this, That good works were not necessary to salvation; that if they did but believe that there was but one God, and that Christ was the Son of God, and the like, and were baptized, they were safe, let them live how

of believing, otherwise he would be still carnal. The faith of a man spiritually dead or carnal, must needs be a dead faith; but to suppose that such faith unites to Christ, has neither scripture nor any plausible reason to support it.

To him that is in Christ Jesus by a vital union, there is no condemnation; and as there is no medium between condemnation and justification, he who is in Christ is justified, or "accepted in the beloved" Saviour. That union which Christ effects by his quickening spirit, makes the tree good, and believing with the heart, in order to receive the promised righteousness, is the fruit of a good tree. Therefore the justification which is received as the consequence of believing is only manifestative of union; even as justification by works, as asserted by St. James, is manifestative of a living faith. As without works there is no sufficient evidence of union to Christ on our part, so without faith in Christ as our complete righteousness, there it no sufficient evidence of union with him on his part.

The true Christian's work, are "works of faith and labours of love," performed in obedience to God's authority, directed to his glory, and inspired by gratitude for the blessings of his grace, and this is the first of all such works, called "the work of God," even to believe on Jesus Christ in whom alone is righteousness and life. By believing we receive the divine testimony respecting a gratuitous righteousness, and renounce all hope of obtaining justification by any other way.

The justifying righteousness is only one, but the appointed ways of becoming interested in it are divers. One way is by the will of God our Saviour, the other by the will of man the accountable agent, each in its own order. The will of God gives the fundamental interest, and the will of man the consequent, and manifestative interest. In the first way, we are interested in Christ's righteousness by one act continued, commencing with, and permanent as the primary vital union; in the other way, it is by repeated acts, commencing with the first act of faith in Christ, and repeated with every succeeding reception of him.

Among persons who have made any, even the smallest progress in Christian knowledge, there can be no dispute respecting the fundamental cause of justification. All such acknowledge, that the righteousness, or federal perfection of Jesus Christ, is that for the sake of which any of the fallen race of Adam can be justified. The difference of sentiment arises from the appointed method of obtaining an interest in this meritorious cause. For want of consideration, we too hastily infer that if the scripture states one appointed method, that it must be an exclusive appointment. Hence one pleads from scripture, and especially St. James's epistle, that this appointed method is by works, that is, evangelical obedience, of which faith is a leading part. Another pleads from scripture, that it is by faith, not as an act of moral obedience, but as a suitable bond of union, to the exclusion of all works. And a third, from the same scripture, pleads that we are justified by an eternal imminent act of God, and that faith only brings us to enjoy a privilege which belongs to the elect from eternity.

Now each of these schemes overlooks the important truth, that the immediate ground of justification is the vital union between Christ and the soul. Justification from eternity precedes vital union; justification by works, denies the fact of a vital union being an adequate ground of a justifying sentence; and justification by faith alone, or believing in Christ, to the exclusion of a prior vital union on the part of the Spirit, confounds the work of man and the work of God. This last being the most difficult part of the subject, I beg leave to make a few observations upon it.

1. The claims of God, in reference to justification, are two-fold. In the first instance, he claims from man a federal perfection; and in the second instance, he

they would; which doctrine greatly tended to licentiousness. The evincing the contrary of this is evidently the apostle's scope.

And that we should understand the apostle, of works justifying as an *evidence*, and in a declarative judgment, is what a due consideration of the context will naturally lead us to. For it is plain, that the apostle is here insisting on works, in the quality of a necessary manifestation and evidence of faith, or as what the truth of faith is made to appear by: As ver. 18. "Shew me thy faith

claims compliance with his method of bestowing an interest in it. The former claim may be answered by the surety, and in fact is answered by his act of a vital union on his part. For by this he gives an interest in himself to the soul he savingly adopts. Thus there is no condemnation to you that are in Christ Jesus. But the latter claim can be answered only by the believer himself, when he actually receives Christ as his righteousness, and so answers the divine requisition. Thus he that believeth in Christ is justified from all things. In the first instance, Christ pleads his own righteousness in behalf of the adopted sinner; in the last instance, the believer pleads the same righteousness in his own behalf.

2. The obligations of man, in reference to justification, are also of two kinds. In the first place, he stands obliged to be conformed to the law as a covenant, which demands a sinless perfection; and, in the second place, he is obliged to conform to the law as a rule. Now whatever God enjoins as a duty is a part of this rule; whether it be to hate sin, to love God, to believe in Christ, or to observe whatever Christ hath commanded. Our obligation to be conformed to the law as a covenant, is discharged by Christ only as our surety; and our ability to discharge our obligation of being conformed to the law as a rule is from him. We are obliged to believe on him as our justifying righteousness, under pain of God's displeasure, but man will ever continue in unbelief until Christ slays his enmity, and enables him to believe. But to slay a sinner's enmity, to change his nature, or to give him ability to believe, is the effect of a vital union; for as there is no such ability without gracious influence, so there is no gracious influence without union to the source of spiritual life. When thus enabled, man exercises repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Receiving him by faith alone, as our righteousness in life, the law is obeyed as the voice of God, requiring the obedience of faith.

3. The method of mercy, in reference to justification, includes the substitution of the Saviour, and our acceptance in him, without any works of righteousness on our part. In this respect, not by works of righteousness which we have done, whether faith, repentance, or any kind of obedience, but according to his mercy he saveth us—provides a Saviour and gives us a saving interest in him. Grace provides, and grace applies the remedy. Mercy imputes to Jesus our sins, and imputes to us his righteousness. He who knew no sin was by sovereign mercy made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Mercy laid the foundation, and placed us on it, that we might become living stones on him; and in consequence find him to be precious.

4. The rule of moral government, in reference to justification, is, that we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness. For this end is the gospel proclaimed to all nations, even for "the obedience of faith." This is the language of divine government, "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." The unbeliever is condemned already, because he rejects the counsel of God, and neglects so great salvation. Mercy hath provided an adequate and all-sufficient remedy, and government requires our closing with it as the only ground of hope left us. An endeavour to set up our own obedience instead of the righteousness of Christ, is rebellion against the authority of God, and undervaluing his wisdom and grace. None deserve condemnation more than those who reject the only remedy. And even they who believe have no ground of boasting. For we are saved by grace, and justified by faith, and that is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God.—The influence of works in justification our author has well explained. W.

without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." And when he says, ver. 26. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also;" it is much more rational and natural to understand him as speaking of works, as the proper signs and evidences of the reality, life, and goodness of faith. Not that the very works or actions done are properly the life of faith, as the spirit in the body, but it is the active, working nature of faith, of which the actions or works done are the signs, that is itself the life and spirit of faith. The sign of a thing is often in scripture language said to be that thing; as it is in that comparison by which the apostle illustrates it. Not the actions themselves of a body, are properly the life or spirit of the body, but the active nature, of which those actions or motions are the signs, is the life of the body. That which makes men pronounce any thing to be alive, is, that they observe it has an active operative nature; which they observe no otherwise than by the actions or motions which are the signs of it. It is plainly the apostle's aim to prove, that if faith hath not works, it is a sign that it is not a good sort of faith; which would not have been to his purpose, if it was his design to shew that it is not by faith alone, though of a right sort, that we have acceptance with God, but that we are accepted on the account of obedience as well as faith. It is evident, by the apostle's reasoning, that the necessity of works, is not from their having a parallel concern in our salvation with faith, but he speaks of works only as related to faith, and expressive of it; which, after all, leaves faith the alone fundamental condition, without any thing else having a parallel concern with it in this affair; and other things conditions, only as several expressions and evidences of it.

That the apostle speaks of works justifying only as a sign or evidence, and in God's declarative judgment, is further confirmed by verse 21. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" Here the apostle seems plainly to refer to that declarative judgment of God, concerning Abraham's sincerity, manifested to him, for the peace and assurance of his own conscience, after his offering up Isaac his son on the altar. Gen. xxii. 12. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." But here it is plain, and expressed in the very words of justification or approbation, that this work of Abraham offering up his son on the altar, justified him as an *evidence*. When the apostle James says, we are justified by works, he may, and ought to be understood in a sense agreeable to the instance he brings for the proof of it: but justification in that instance appears by the words of justification themselves, to be by works as an evidence. And where this instance of Abraham's

obedience is elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, it is mentioned as a fruit and evidence of his faith. Heb. xi. 17. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son."

And in the other instance which the apostle mentions, verse 25. "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" The apostle refers to a declarative judgment, in that particular testimony which was given of God's approbation of her as a believer, in directing Joshua to save her when the rest of Jericho was destroyed, Josh. vi. 25. "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." This was accepted as an evidence and expression of her faith. Heb. xi. 31. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." The apostle in saying, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works?" by the manner of his speaking has reference to something in her history; but we have no account in her history of any other justification of her but this.

4. If, notwithstanding, any choose to take justification in St. James's, precisely as we do in Paul's epistle's, for God's acceptance or approbation itself, and not any expression of that approbation, what has been already said concerning the manner in which acts of evangelical obedience are concerned in the affair of our justification, affords a very easy, clear, and full answer. For if we take works as acts or expressions of faith, they are not excluded; so a man is not justified by faith only, but also by works; *i. e.* he is not justified only by faith as a principle in the heart, or in its first and more imminent acts, but also by the effective acts of it in life, which are the expressions of the life of faith, as the operations and actions of the body are of the life of that; agreeable to verse 26.

What has been said in answer to these objections, may also, I hope, abundantly serve for an answer to another objection, often made against this doctrine, *viz.* that it encourages licentiousness in life. For, from what has been said, we may see that the scripture doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any manner of goodness or excellency of ours, does in no wise diminish either the necessity or benefit of a sincere evangelical universal *obedience*. Man's salvation is not only indissolubly connected with obedience, and damnation with the want of it, in those who have opportunity for it, but depends upon it in many respects. It is the way to salvation, and the necessary preparation for it; eternal blessings are bestowed in reward for it, and our justification in

our own consciences and at the day of judgment, depends on it, as the proper evidence of our acceptable state; and that, even in accepting of us as entitled to life in our justification, God has respect to this, as that on which the fitness of such an act of justification depends; so that our *salvation* does as truly depend upon it, as if we were justified for the moral excellency of it. And besides all this, the degree of our happiness to all eternity is suspended on, and determined by the degree of this. So that this gospel-scheme of justification is as far from encouraging licentiousness, and contains as much to encourage and excite to strict and universal obedience, and the utmost possible eminency of holiness, as any scheme that can be devised, and indeed unspeakably more.

I come now to the

V. And last thing proposed, which is, to consider the "importance of this doctrine."

I know there are many who make as though this controversy was of no great importance; that it is chiefly a matter of nice speculation, depending on certain subtile distinctions, which many that make use of them do not understand themselves; and that the difference is not of such consequence as to be worth being zealous about; and that more hurt is done by raising disputes about it than good.

Indeed I am far from thinking that it is of absolute necessity persons should understand, and be agreed upon, all the distinctions needful particularly to explain and defend this doctrine against all cavils and objections. Yet all Christians should strive after an increase of knowledge; and none should content themselves without some clear and distinct understanding in this point. But we should believe in the general, according to the clear and abundant revelations of God's word, that it is none of our own excellency, virtue, or righteousness, that is the *ground* of our being received from a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance in God's sight, but only Jesus Christ, and his righteousness, and worthiness, received by faith. This I think to be of great importance, at least in application to ourselves; and that for the following reasons.

1. The scripture treats of this doctrine as a doctrine of very great importance. That there is a certain doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to justification by the works of the law, which the apostle Paul insists upon as of the greatest importance, none will deny; because there is nothing in the Bible more apparent. The apostle, under the infallible conduct of the Spirit of God, thought it worth his most strenuous and zealous disputing about and defending. He speaks of the contrary doctrine as fatal and ruinous to the souls of men, in the latter end of the 9th chapter of

Romans, and beginning of the 10th. He speaks of it as subversive of the gospel of Christ, and calls it another gospel, and says concerning it, if any one, "though an angel from heaven, preach it, let him be accursed;" Gal. i. 6—9. compared with the following part of the epistle. Certainly we must allow the apostles to be good judges of the importance and tendency of doctrines; at least the Holy Ghost in them. And doubtless we are safe, and in no danger of harshness and censoriousness, if we only follow him, and keep close to his express teachings, in what we believe and say of the hurtful and pernicious tendency of any error. Why are we to blame for saying what the Bible has taught us to say, or for believing what the Holy Ghost has taught us to that end that we might believe it?

2. The adverse scheme lays another foundation of man's salvation than God hath laid. I do not now speak of that ineffectual redemption that they suppose to be universal, and what all mankind are equally the subjects of; but, I say, it lays entirely another foundation of man's actual, discriminating salvation, or that salvation wherein true Christians differ from wicked men. We suppose the foundation of this to be Christ's worthiness and righteousness; on the contrary, that scheme supposes it to be men's own virtue; even so, that this is the ground of a saving interest in Christ itself. It takes away Christ out of the place of the bottom stone, and puts in men's own virtue in the room of him: So that Christ himself, in the affair of distinguishing actual salvation, is laid upon this foundation. And the foundation being so different, I leave it to every one to judge whether the difference between the two schemes consists only in punctilios of small consequence. The foundation being contrary, makes the whole scheme exceeding diverse and opposite; the one is a gospel scheme, the other a legal one.

3. It is in this doctrine that the most essential difference lies between the covenant of grace and the first covenant. The adverse scheme of justification supposes that we are justified by our *works*, in the very same sense wherein man was to have been justified by his works under the first covenant. By that covenant our first parents were not to have had eternal life given them for any proper merit in their obedience; because their perfect obedience was a debt that they owed God. Nor was it to be bestowed for any proportion between the dignity of their obedience, and the value of the reward; but only it was to be bestowed from a regard to a moral fitness in the virtue of their obedience, to the reward of God's favour; and a title to eternal life was to be given them, as a testimony of God's pleasedness with their works, or his regard to the inherent beauty of their virtue. And so it is the very same way that those in the adverse scheme suppose that we

are received into God's special favour now, and to those saving benefits that are the testimonies of it. I am sensible the divines of that side entirely disclaim the Popish doctrine of *merit;* and are free to speak of our utter unworthiness, and the great imperfection of all our services. But after all, it is our *virtue,* imperfect as it is, that recommends men to God, by which good men come to have a saving interest in Christ, and God's favour, rather than others; and these things are bestowed in testimony of God's respect to their goodness. So that whether they will allow the term *merit* or no, yet they hold, that we are accepted by our own merit, in the same sense, though not in the same degree, as under the first covenant.

But the great and most distinguishing difference between that covenant and the covenant of grace is, that by the covenant of grace we are not thus justified by our own works, but only by faith in Jesus Christ. It is on this account chiefly that the new covenant deserves the name of a covenant of grace, as is evident by Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." And chap. iii. 20, 24. "Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And chap. xi. 6. "And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Gal. v. 4. "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." And therefore the apostle, in the same epistle to the Galatians, speaking of the doctrine of justification by works as another gospel, adds, "which is not another," chap. i. verse 6, 7. It is no gospel at all; it is law. It is no covenant of grace, but of works; not an evangelical, but a legal doctrine. Certainly that doctrine wherein consists the greatest and most essential difference between the covenant of grace and the first covenant, must be a doctrine of great importance. That doctrine of the gospel by which above all others it is worthy of the name of gospel, is doubtless a very important doctrine of the gospel.

4. This is the main thing for which fallen men stood in need of divine revelation, to teach us how we who have sinned may come to be again accepted of God; or, which is the same thing, how the sinner may be justified. Something beyond the light of nature is necessary to salvation chiefly on this account. Mere natural reason afforded no means by which we could come to the knowledge of this, it depending on the sovereign pleasure of the Being that we had offended by sin. This seems to be the great drift of that revelation which God has given, and of all those mysteries it reveals, all those great doctrines that are peculiarly doctrines of

revelation, and above the light of nature. It seems to have been very much on this account, that it was requisite the doctrine of the Trinity itself should be revealed to us; that by a discovery of the concern of the several divine persons in the great affair of our salvation, we might the better understand and see how all our dependence in this affair is on God, and our sufficiency all in him, and not in ourselves; that he is all in all in this business, agreeable to 1 Cor. i. 29—31. "That no flesh shall glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." What is the gospel, but only the glad tidings of a new way of acceptance with God unto life, a way wherein sinners may come to be free from the guilt of sin, and obtain a title to eternal life? And if, when this way is revealed, it is rejected, and another man's devising be put in the room of it, without doubt, it must be an error of great importance, and the apostle might well say it was another gospel.

5. The contrary scheme of justification derogates much from the honour of God and the Mediator. I have already shewn how it diminishes the glory of the Mediator, in describing that to man's virtue and goodness, which belongs alone to his worthiness and righteousness. By the apostle's sense of the matter it renders Christ needless. Gal. v. 4. "Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." If that scheme of justification be followed in its consequences, it utterly overthrows the glory of all the great things that have been contrived, and done, and suffered in the work of redemption. Gal. ii. 21. "If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain." It has also been already shewn how it diminishes the glory of divine grace, (which is the attribute God hath especially set himself to glorify in the work of redemption;) and so that it greatly diminishes the obligation to gratitude in the sinner that is saved. Yea, in the sense of the apostle, it makes void the distinguishing grace of the gospel. Gal. v. 4. "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, are fallen from grace." It diminishes the glory of the grace of God and the Redeemer, and proportionably magnifies man. It makes the goodness and excellency of fallen man to be something, which I have shewn are nothing. I have also already shewn, that it is contrary to the truth of God in the threatening of his holy law, to justify the sinner for his virtue. And whether it were contrary to God's truth or no, it is a scheme of things very unworthy of God. It supposes that God, when about to lift up a poor forlorn malefactor condemned to eternal misery for sinning against his majesty, and to make him unspeakably and eter-

nally happy by bestowing his Son and himself upon him, as it were, sets all this to sale, for the price of his virtue and excellency. I know that those whom we oppose acknowledge, that the price is very disproportionate to the benefit bestowed; and say, that God's grace is wonderfully manifested in accepting so little virtue, and bestowing so glorious a reward for such imperfect righteousness. But seeing we are such infinitely sinful and abominable creatures in God's sight, and by our infinite guilt have brought ourselves into such wretched and deplorable circumstances—and all our righteousnesses are nothing, and ten thousand times worse than nothing, if God looks upon them as they are in themselves—is it not immensely more worthy of the infinite majesty and glory of God, to deliver and make happy such wretched vagabonds and captives, without any money or price of theirs, or any manner of expectation of excellency or virtue in them, in any wise to recommend them? Will it not betray a foolish exalting opinion of ourselves, and a mean one of God, to have a thought of offering any thing of ours, to recommend us to the favour of being brought from wallowing, like filthy swine, in the mire of our sins, and from the enmity and misery of devils in the lowest hell, to the state of God's dear children, in the everlasting arms of his love, in heavenly glory; or to imagine that it is the constitution of God, that we should bring our filthy rags, and offer them to him as the *price* of this?

6. The opposite scheme does most directly tend to lead men to trust in their own righteousness for justification, which is a thing fatal to the soul. This is what men are of themselves exceeding prone to do, (and that though they are never so much taught the contrary,) through the partial and high thoughts they have of themselves, and their exceeding dulness of apprehending any such mystery as our being accepted for the righteousness of another. But this scheme directly teaches men to trust in their own righteousness for justification; in that it teaches them that this is indeed what they must be justified by, being the way of justification which God himself has appointed. So that if a man had naturally no disposition to trust in his own righteousness, yet if he embraced this scheme, and acted consistently, it would lead him to it. But that trusting in our own righteousness, is a thing fatal to the soul, is what the scripture plainly teaches us. It tells us, that it will cause that Christ shall profit us nothing, and be of no effect to us, Gal. v. 2—4. For though the apostle speaks there particularly of circumcision, yet it is not merely being circumcised, but trusting in circumcision as a righteousness, that the apostle has respect to. He could not mean, that merely being circumcised would render Christ of no profit or effect to a person; for

we read that he himself, for certain reasons, took Timothy and circumcised him, Acts xvi. 3. And the same is evident by the context, and by the rest of the epistle. And the apostle speaks of trusting in their own righteousness as fatal to the Jews, Rom. ix. 31, 32. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." Together with chap. x. verse 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And this is spoken of as fatal to the Pharisees, in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, which Christ spake to them, in order to reprove them for trusting in themselves that they were righteous. The design of the parable is to shew them, that the very publicans shall be justified, rather than they; as appears by the reflection Christ makes upon it, Luke xviii. 14. "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other;" that is, this and not the other. The fatal tendency of it might also be proved from its inconsistence with the nature of justifying faith, and with the nature of that humiliation that the scripture often speaks of as absolutely necessary to salvation; but these scriptures are so express, that it is needless to bring any further arguments.

How far a wonderful and mysterious agency of God's Spirit may so influence some men's hearts, that their practice in this regard may be contrary to their own principles, so that they shall not trust in their own righteousness, though they profess that men are justified by their own righteousness—or how far they may believe the doctrine of justification by men's own righteousness in general, and yet not believe it in a particular application of it to themselves—or how far that error which they may have been led into by education, or cunning sophistry of others, may yet be indeed contrary to the prevailing disposition of their hearts, and contrary to their practice. Or how far some may seem to maintain a doctrine contrary to this gospel-doctrine of justification, that really do not, but only express themselves differently from others; or seem to oppose it through their misunderstanding of our expressions, or we of theirs, when indeed our real sentiments are the same in the main—or may seem to differ more than they do, by using terms that are without a precisely fixed and determinate meaning—or to be wide in their sentiments from this doctrine, for want of a distinct understanding of it; whose hearts, at the same time, entirely agree with it, and if once it was clearly explained to their understandings, would immediately close with

it, and embrace it: how far these things may be, I will not determine; but am fully persuaded that great allowances are to be made on these and such like accounts, in innumerable instances; though it is manifest, from what has been said, that the teaching and propagating contrary doctrines and schemes, is of a pernicious and fatal tendency.

DISCOURSE II.

PRESSING INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

LUKE XVI. 16.

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

IN these words two things may be observed: *First*, Wherein the work and office of John the Baptist consisted, *viz.* in preaching the kingdom of God, to prepare the way for its introduction to succeed the law and the prophets. By the law and the prophets, in the text, seems to be intended the ancient dispensation under the Old Testament, which was received from Moses and the prophets. These are said to be *until John;* not that the revelations given by them are out of use since that time, but that the state of the church, founded and regulated under God by them, the dispensation of which they were the ministers, and wherein the church depended mainly on light received from them, fully continued till John. He first began to introduce the New Testament dispensation, or gospel state of the church; which, with its glorious spiritual, and eternal privileges and blessings, is often called the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God. John the Baptist preached, that the kingdom of God was at hand. "Repent," says he, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:"—"Since that time," says Christ, "the kingdom of God is preached." John the Baptist first began to preach it; and then, after him, Christ and his disciples preached the same. Thus Christ preached, Matth. iv. 17. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So the disciples were directed to preach, Matth. x. 7. "And, as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was not John the Baptist, but Christ, that fully brought in, and actually established this kingdom of God; but he, as Christ's forerunner to prepare his way before him, did the first thing that was done

towards introducing it. The old dispensation was abolished, and the new brought in by degrees; as the night gradually ceases and gives place to the increasing day which succeeds in its room. First the day-star rises; next follows the light of the sun itself, but dimly reflected, in the dawning of the day; but this light increases and shines more and more, and the stars that served for light during the foregoing night, gradually go out, and their light ceases, as being now needless; till at length the sun rises, and enlightens the world by his own direct light, which increases as he ascends higher above the horizon, till the day-star itself gradually disappears; agreeable to what John says of himself, John iii. 30. "He must increase, but I must decrease." John was the forerunner of Christ, and harbinger of the gospel-day; much as the morning-star is the forerunner of the sun. He had the most honourable office of any of the prophets; the other prophets foretold Christ to come, he revealed him as already come, and had the honour to be that servant who should come immediately before him, and actually introduce him, and even to be the instrument concerned in his solemn inauguration, as he was in baptizing him. He was the greatest of the prophets that came before Christ, as the morning-star is the brightest of all the stars, Matth. xi. 11. He came to prepare men's hearts to receive that kingdom of God which Christ was about more fully to reveal and erect. Luke i. 17. "To make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Secondly, We may observe wherein his success appeared, *viz.* in that since he began his ministry, every man pressed into that kingdom of God which he preached. The greatness of his success appeared in two things:

1. In the generalness of it, with regard to the subject, or the person in whom the success appeared; *every man*. Here is a term of universality; but it is not to be taken as universal with regard to individuals, but kinds; as such universal terms are often used in scripture. When John preached, there was an extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God that attended his preaching. An uncommon awakening, and concern for salvation, appeared on the minds of all sorts of persons; and even in the most unlikely persons, and those from whom such a thing might least be expected; as the Pharisees, who were exceeding proud, and self-sufficient, and conceited of their own wisdom and righteousness, and looked on themselves fit to be teachers of others, and used to scorn to be taught; and the Sadducees, who were a kind of Infidels, that denied any resurrection, angel, or spirit, or any future state. So that John himself seems to be surprised to see them come to him, under such concern for their salvation; as in Matth. iii. 7. "But when he saw many of the Pha-

risees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" And besides these, the publicans, who were some of the most infamous sort of men, came to him, inquiring what they should do to be saved. And the soldiers, who were doubtless a very profane, loose, and profligate sort of persons, made the same inquiry, Luke iii. 12, and 14. "Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, and what shall we do?"

2. His success appeared in the manner in which his hearers sought the kingdom of God: they pressed into it. It is elsewhere set forth by their being violent for the kingdom of heaven, and taking it by force. Matth. xi. 12. "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

The DOCTRINE that I observe from the words is this. "It concerns every one that would obtain the kingdom of God to be pressing into it." In discoursing on this subject, I would,

First, shew *what* is that way of seeking salvation that seems to be pointed forth in the expression of *pressing into the kingdom of God.*

Secondly, Give the reasons *why* it concerns every one that would obtain the kingdom of God, to seek it in this way: and then make application.

I. I would shew what manner of seeking salvation seems to be denoted by "pressing into the kingdom of God."

1. This expression denotes *strength of desire.* Men in general, who live under the light of the gospel, and are not Atheists, desire the kingdom of God; that is, they desire to go to heaven rather than to hell. Most of them indeed are not much concerned about it; but on the contrary, live a secure and careless life.—And some who are many degrees above these, being under some degrees of the awakenings of God's Spirit, yet are not pressing into the kingdom of God. But they that may be said to be truly so, have strong desires to get out of a natural condition, and to get an interest in Christ. They have such a conviction of the misery of their present state, and of the extreme necessity of obtaining a better, that their minds are as it were possessed with, and wrapped up in concern about it. To obtain salvation is desired by them above all things in the world; this concern is so great that it very much shuts out other concerns. They used before to have the stream of their desires after other things, or, it may be, had their concern divided between this and them; but when they

come to answer the expression in the text, of *pressing into the kingdom of God*, this concern prevails above all others; it lays other things low, and does in a manner engross the care of the mind. This seeking eternal life should not only be one concern that our souls are taken up about with other things; but salvation should be sought as the one thing needful, Luke x. 42. And as the one thing that is desired, Psalm xxvii. 4.

2. Pressing into the kingdom of heaven, denotes earnestness and *firmness of resolution*. There should be strength of resolution accompanying strength of desire, as it was in the Psalmist, in the place just now referred to; "one thing have I desired, and that will I seek after." In order to a thorough engagedness of the mind in this affair, both these must meet together. Besides desire after salvation, there should be an earnest resolution in persons to pursue this good as much as lies in their power; to do all that in the use of their utmost strength they are able to do, in an attendance on every duty, and resisting and militating against all manner of sin, and to continue in such a pursuit.

There are two things needful in a person, in order to these strong resolutions; there must be a sense of the great importance and necessity of the mercy sought, and there must also be a sense of opportunity to obtain it, or the encouragement there is to seek it. The strength of resolution depends on the sense which God gives to the heart of these things. Persons without such a sense, may seem to themselves to take up resolutions; they may, as it were, force a promise to themselves, and say within themselves, "I will seek as long as I live, I will not give up till I obtain," when they do but deceive themselves. Their hearts are not in it; neither do they indeed take up any such resolution as they seem to themselves to do. It is the resolution of the mouth more than of the heart; their hearts are not strongly bent to fulfil what their mouth says. The firmness of resolution lies in the fullness of the disposition of the heart to do what is resolved to be done. Those who are pressing into the kingdom of God, have a disposition of heart to do every thing that is required, and that lies in their power to do, and to continue in it. They have not only earnestness, but steadiness of resolution: They do not seek with a wavering unsteady heart, by turns or fits, being off and on, but it is the constant bent of the soul, if possible, to obtain the kingdom of God.

3. By pressing into the kingdom of God is signified *greatness of endeavour*. It is expressed in Eccles. ix. 10. by doing what our hand finds to do *with our might*. And this is the natural and necessary consequence of the two forementioned things. Where there is strength of desire, and firmness of resolution, there will be answerable endeavours. Persons thus engaged in their hearts will "strive to enter in at the straight gate," and will be violent

for heaven; their practice will be agreeable to the counsel of the wise man, in Prov. ii. at the beginning, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding: Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Here the earnestness of desire and strength of resolution is signified by inclining the ear to wisdom, and applying the heart to understanding; and the greatness of endeavour is denoted by crying after knowledge, and lifting up the voice for understanding; seeking her as silver, and searching for her as for hid treasures: Such desires and resolutions, and such endeavours, go together.

4. Pressing into the kingdom of God denotes an engagedness and earnestness, that is *directly about that business* of getting into the kingdom of God. Persons may be in very great exercise and distress of mind, and that about the condition of their souls; their thoughts and cares may be greatly engaged and taken up about things of a spiritual nature, and yet not be pressing into the kingdom of God, nor toward it. The exercise of their minds is not directly about the work of *seeking* salvation, in a diligent attendance on the means that God hath appointed in order to it, but something else that is beside their business; it may be about God's decrees and secret purposes, prying into them, searching for signs whereby they may determine, or at least conjecture, what they are before God makes them known by their accomplishment. They distress their minds with fears that they be not elected, or that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that their day is past, and that God has given them up to judicial and final hardness, and never intends to shew them mercy; and therefore, that it is in vain for them to seek salvation. Or they entangle themselves about the doctrine of original sin, and other mysterious doctrines of religion that are above their comprehension. Many persons that seem to be in great distress about a future eternal state, get much into a way of perplexing themselves with such things as these. When it is so, let them be never so much concerned and engaged in their minds, they cannot be said to be pressing towards the kingdom of God; because their exercise is not in their *work*, but rather in that which tends to *hinder* them in their work. If they are violent, they are only working violently to *entangle* themselves, and lay blocks in their own way; their pressure is not forwards. Instead of getting along, they do but lose their time, and worse than merely lose it; instead of fighting with the giants that stand in the way to keep them out

of Canaan, they spend away their time and strength in conflicting with shadows that appear by the way-side.

Hence we are not to judge of the hopefulness of the way that persons are in, or of the probability of their success in seeking salvation, only by the greatness of the concern and distress that they are in; for many persons have needless distresses that they had much better be without. It is thus very often with persons overrun with the distemper of melancholy; whence the adversary of souls is wont to take great advantage. But then are persons in the most likely way to obtain the kingdom of heaven, when the intent of their minds, and the engagedness of their spirits, is about their *proper work* and business, and all the bent of their souls is to attend on God's means, and to do what he commands and directs them to. The apostle tells us, 1 Cor. ix. 26. "that he did not fight as those that beat the air." Our time is short enough: we had not need to spend it in that which is nothing to the purpose. There are real difficulties and enemies enough for persons to encounter, to employ all their strength; they had not need to waste it in fighting with phantoms.

5. By pressing into the kingdom of God is denoted a *breaking through opposition and difficulties*. There is in the expression a plain intimation of difficulty. If there were no opposition, but the way was all clear and open, there would be no need of pressing to get along. They therefore that are pressing into the kingdom of God, go on with such engagedness, that they break through the difficulties that are in their way. They are so set for salvation, that those things by which others are discouraged, and stopped, and turned back, do not stop them, but they press through them. Persons ought to be so resolved for heaven, that if by any means they *can* obtain, they *will* obtain. Whether those means be difficult or easy, cross or agreeable, if they are requisite means of salvation, they should be complied with. When any thing is presented to be done, the question should not be, Is it easy or hard? is it agreeable to my carnal inclinations or interest, or against them? But, Is it a required means of my obtaining an interest in Jesus Christ, and eternal salvation? Thus the apostle, Philip. iii. 11. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." He tells us there in the context what difficulties he broke through, that he suffered the loss of all things, and was willingly made conformable even to Christ's death, though that was attended with such extreme torment and ignominy.

He that is pressing into the kingdom of God, commonly finds many things in the way that are against the grain; but he is not stopped by the cross that lies before him, but takes it up, and car-

ries it. Suppose there be something incumbent on him to do, that is cross to his natural temper, and irksome to him on that account; suppose something that he cannot do without suffering in his estate, or that he apprehends will look odd and strange in the eyes of others, and expose him to ridicule and reproach, or any thing that will offend a neighbour and get his ill-will, or something that will be very cross to his own carnal appetite—he will *press through such difficulties.* Every thing that is found to be a weight that hinders him in running this race he casts from him, though it be a weight of gold or pearls; yea, if it be a right hand or foot that offends him, he will cut them off, and will not stick at plucking out a right eye with his own hands. These things are insuperable difficulties to those who are not thoroughly engaged in seeking their salvation; they are stumbling-blocks that they never get over. But it is not so with him that presses into the kingdom of God. Those things, (before he was thoroughly roused from his security,) about which he was wont to have long parleyings and disputings with his own conscience—employing carnal reason to invent arguments and pleas of excuse—he now sticks at no longer; he has done with this endless disputing and reasoning, and presses violently through all difficulties. Let what will be in the way, heaven is what he must and will obtain, not if he can without difficulty, but if it be possible. He meets with temptation: the devil is often whispering in his ear, setting allurements before him, magnifying the difficulties of the work he is engaged in, telling him that they are insuperable, and that he can never conquer them, and trying all ways in the world to discourage him; but still he presses forward. God has given, and maintains such an earnest spirit for heaven, that the devil cannot stop him in his course; he is not at leisure to lend an ear to what he has to say. I come now,

II. To shew *why* the kingdom of heaven should be sought in this manner.—It should be thus sought,

1. On account of the *extreme necessity* we are in of getting into the kingdom of heaven. We are in a perishing necessity of it; without it we are utterly and eternally lost. Out of the kingdom of God is no safety; there is no other hiding-place; this is the only city of refuge, in which we can be secure from the avenger that pursues all the ungodly. The vengeance of God will pursue, overtake, and eternally destroy them that are not in this kingdom. All that are without this inclosure will be swallowed up in an overflowing fiery deluge of wrath. They may stand at the door and knock, and cry, Lord, Lord, open to us, in vain; they will be thrust back; and God will have no mercy on them; they shall be eternally left of him. His fearful vengeance will seize

them; the devils will lay hold of them; and all evil will come upon them; and there will be none to pity or help; their case will be utterly desperate, and infinitely doleful. It will be a gone case with them; all offers of mercy and expressions of divine goodness will be finally withdrawn, and all hope will be lost. God will have no kind of regard to their well-being; will take no care of them to save them from any enemy, or any evil; but himself will be their dreadful enemy, and will execute wrath with fury, and will take vengeance in an inexpressibly dreadful manner. Such as shall be in this case will be lost and undone indeed! They will be sunk down into perdition, infinitely below all that we can think. For who knows the power of God's anger? And who knows the misery of that poor worm, on whom that anger is executed without mercy?

2. On account of the shortness and *uncertainty of the opportunity* for getting into this kingdom. When a few days are past, all our opportunity for it will be gone. Our day is limited. God has set our bounds, and we know not where. While persons are out of this kingdom, they are in danger every hour of being overtaken with wrath. We know not how soon we shall get past that line, beyond which there is no work, device, knowledge, nor wisdom; and therefore we should do what we have to do with our might. Eccles. ix. 10.

3. On account of the *difficulty* of getting into the kingdom of God. There are innumerable difficulties in the way; such as few conquer: most of them that try have not resolution, courage, earnestness, and constancy enough; but they fail, give up, and perish. The difficulties are too many and too great for them that do not violently press forward. They never get along, but stick by the way; are turned aside, or turned back, and ruined. Matt. vii. 14. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Luke xiii. 24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

4. The *possibility* of obtaining. Though it be attended with so much difficulty, yet it is not a thing impossible. Acts viii. 22. "If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." 2 Tim. ii. 25. "If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." However sinful a person is, and whatever his circumstances are, there is, notwithstanding, a possibility of his salvation. He himself is capable of it, and God is able to accomplish it, and has mercy sufficient for it; and there is sufficient provision made through Christ, that God may do it consistent with the honour of his majesty, justice, and truth. So that there is no want either of sufficiency in God, or capacity in the sinner, in order to this. The greatest and vilest, most

blind, dead, hard-hearted sinner living, is a subject capable of saving light and grace. Seeing therefore there is such necessity of obtaining the kingdom of God, and so short a time, and such difficulty, and yet such a possibility, it may well induce us to press into it. Jonah iii. 8, 9.

5. It is meet that the kingdom of heaven should be thus sought, because of the *great excellency* of it. We are willing to seek earthly things, of trifling value, with great diligence, and through much difficulty; it therefore certainly becomes us to seek that with great earnestness which is of infinitely greater worth and excellence. And how well may God expect and require it of us, that we should seek it in such a manner, in order to our obtaining it?

6. Such a manner of seeking is *needful to prepare* persons for the kingdom of God. Such earnestness and thoroughness of endeavours, is the ordinary means that God makes use of to bring persons to an acquaintance with themselves, to a sight of their own hearts, to a sense of their own helplessness, and to a despair in their own strength and righteousness. And such engagedness and constancy in seeking the kingdom of heaven, prepare the soul to receive it the more joyfully and thankfully, and the more highly to prise and value it when obtained. So that it is in mercy to us, as well as for the glory of his own name, that God has appointed such earnest seeking, to be the way in which he will bestow the kingdom of heaven.

APPLICATION.

The use I would make of this doctrine, is of *exhortation* to all Christless persons to press into the kingdom of God. Some of you are inquiring what you shall do? You seem to desire to know what is the way wherein salvation is to be sought, and how you may be likely to obtain it. You have now heard the way that the holy word of God directs to. Some are seeking, but it cannot be said of them that they are *pressing* into the kingdom of heaven. There are many that in time past have sought salvation, but not in this manner, and so they never obtained, but are now gone to hell. Some of them sought it year after year, but failed of it, and perished at last. They were overtaken with divine wrath, and are now suffering the fearful misery of damnation, and have no rest day nor night, having no more opportunity to seek, but must suffer and be miserable throughout the never-ending ages of eternity. Be exhorted, therefore, not to seek salvation as they did, but let the kingdom of heaven suffer violence from you.

Here I would first answer an *objection* or two, and then proceed to give some *directions* how to press into the kingdom of God.

Object. 1. Some may be ready to say, we cannot do this of ourselves; that strength of desire, and firmness of resolution, that have been spoken of, are out of our reach. If I endeavour to resolve and to seek with engagedness of spirit, I find I fail: my thoughts are presently off from the business, and I feel myself dull, and my engagedness relaxed in spite of all I can do.

Ans. 1. Though earnestness of mind be not immediately in your power, yet the consideration of what has been now said of the *need* of it, may be a means of stirring you up to it. It is true, persons never will be thoroughly engaged in this business, unless it be by God's influence; but God influences persons by means. Persons are not stirred up to a thorough earnestness without some considerations that move them to it. And if persons can but be made sensible of the necessity of salvation, and also duly consider the exceeding difficulty of it, and the greatness of the opposition, and how short and uncertain the time is, but yet are sensible that they have an opportunity, and that there is a possibility of their obtaining, they will need no more in order to their being thoroughly engaged and resolved in this matter. If we see persons slack and unresolved, and unsteady, it is because they do not enough consider these things.

2. Though strong desires and resolutions of mind be not in your power, yet painfulness of endeavours is in your power. It is in your power to take pains in the use of means, yea very great pains. You can be very painful and diligent in watching your own heart, and striving against sin. Though there is all manner of corruption in the heart continually ready to work, yet you can very laboriously watch and strive against these corruptions; and it is in your power with great diligence, to attend the matter of your duty towards God and towards your neighbour. It is in your power to attend all ordinances, and all public and private duties of religion, and to do it with your might. It would be a contradiction to suppose that a man cannot do these things with all the might he has, though he cannot do them with more might than he has. The dulness and deadness of the heart, and slothfulness of disposition, do not hinder men being able to take pains though it hinders their being willing. That is one thing wherein your laboriousness may appear, even striving against your own dulness. That men have a dead and sluggish heart, does not argue that they be not able to take pains; it is so far from that, that it gives occasion for pains. It is one of the difficulties in the way of duty, that persons have to strive with, and that gives occasion for struggling and labour. If there were no difficulties attended

seeking salvation, there would be no occasion for striving; a man would have nothing to strive about. There is indeed a great deal of difficulty attending all duties required of those that would obtain heaven. It is an exceeding difficult thing for them to keep their thoughts; it is a difficult thing seriously, or to any good purpose, to consider matters of the greatest importance; it is a difficult thing to hear, or read, or pray attentively. But it does not argue that a man cannot strive in these things because they are difficult; nay, he could not strive therein if there were not difficulty in them. For what is there excepting difficulties that any can have to strive or struggle with in any affair or business? Earnestness of mind, and diligence of endeavour, tend to promote each other. He that has a heart earnestly engaged, will take pains; and he that is diligent and painful in all duty, probably will not be so long before he finds the sensibleness of his heart and earnestness of his spirit greatly increased.

Object. 2. Some may object, that if they are earnest, and take a great deal of pains, they shall be in danger of trusting to what they do; they are afraid of doing their duty for fear of making a righteousness of it.

Ans. There is ordinarily no kind of seekers that trust so much to what they do, as slack and dull seekers. Though all seeking salvation, that have never been the subjects of a thorough humiliation, do trust in their own righteousness; yet some do it much more fully than others. Some, though they *trust* in their own righteousness, yet are not *quiet* in it. And those who are most disturbed in their self-confidence, (and therefore in the likeliest way to be wholly brought off from it,) are not such as go on in a remiss way of seeking, but such as are most earnest and thoroughly engaged; partly because in such a way conscience is kept more sensible. A more awakened conscience will not rest so quietly in moral and religious duties, as one that is less awakened. A dull seeker's conscience will be in a great measure satisfied and quieted with his own works and performances; but one that is thoroughly awakened cannot be stilled or pacified with such things as these. In this way persons gain much more knowledge of themselves, and acquaintance with their own hearts, than in a negligent slight way of seeking; for they have a great deal more experience of themselves. It is experience of ourselves, and finding what we are, that God commonly makes use of as the means of bringing us off from all dependence on ourselves. But men never get acquaintance with themselves so fast, as in the most earnest way of seeking. They that are in this way have more to engage them to think of their sins, and strictly to observe themselves, and have much more to do with their own hearts, than others. Such a one has much more experience of his own weak-

ness, than another that does not put forth and try his strength; and will therefore sooner see himself dead in sin. Such a one, though he hath a disposition continually to be flying to his own righteousness, yet finds rest in nothing; he wanders about from one thing to another, seeking something to ease his disquieted conscience; he is driven from one refuge to another, goes from mountain to hill, seeking rest and finding none; and therefore will the sooner prove that there is no rest to be found, nor trust to be put in any creature whatsoever.

It is therefore quite a wrong notion that some entertain, that the more they do, the more they shall depend on it. Whereas the reverse is true: the more they do, or the more thorough they are in seeking, the less will they be likely to rest in their doings, and the sooner will they see the vanity of all that they do. So that persons will exceedingly miss it, if ever they neglect to do any duty either to God or man, whether it be any duty of religion, justice, or charity, under a notion of its exposing them to trust in their own righteousness. It is very true, that it is a common thing for persons, when they earnestly seek salvation, to trust in the pains that they take: but yet commonly those that go on in a more slight way, trust a great deal more securely to their dull services, than he that is pressing into the kingdom of God does to his earnestness. Men's slackness in religion, and their trust in their own righteousness, strengthen and establish one another.—Their trust in what they have done, and what they now do, settles them in a slothful rest and ease, and hinders their being sensible of their need of rousing up themselves and pressing forward. And on the other hand, their negligence tends so to benumb them, and keep them in such ignorance of themselves, that the most miserable refuges are stupidly rested in as sufficient. Therefore we see, that when persons have been going on for a long time in such a way, and God afterwards comes more thoroughly to awaken them, and to stir them up to be in good earnest, he shakes all their old foundations, and rouses them out of their old resting-places; so that they cannot quiet themselves with those things that formerly kept them secure.

I would now proceed to give some *directions* how you should press into the kingdom of God.

1. Be directed to sacrifice *every thing* to your soul's eternal interest. Let seeking this be so much your bent, and what you are so resolved in, that you will make every thing give place to it. Let nothing stand before your resolution of seeking the kingdom of God. Whatever it be that you used to look upon as a convenience, or comfort, or ease, or thing desirable on any account, if it stands in the way of this great concern, let it be dismissed

without hesitation; and if it be of that nature that it is likely always to be an hinderance, then wholly have done with it, and never entertain any expectation from it more. If in time past you have, for the sake of worldly gain, involved yourself in more care and business than you find to be consistent with your being so thorough in the business of religion as you ought to be, then get into some other way, though you suffer in your worldly interest by it. Or if you have heretofore been conversant with company that you have reason to think have been, and will be a snare to you, and an hinderance to this great design in any wise, break off from their society, however it may expose you to reproach from your old companions, or let what will be the effect of it. Whatever it be that stands in the way of your most advantageously seeking salvation—whether it be some dear sinful pleasure, or strong carnal appetite, or credit and honour, or the good-will of some persons whose friendship you desire, and whose esteem and liking you have highly valued—and though there be danger, if you do as you ought, that you shall be looked upon by them as odd and ridiculous, and become contemptible in their eyes—or if it be your ease and indolence, and aversion to continual labour, or your outward convenience in any respect, whereby you might avoid difficulties of one kind or other—*let all go;* offer up all such things together, as it were, in one sacrifice, to the interest of your soul. Let nothing stand in competition with this, but make every thing to fall before it. If the flesh must be crossed, then cross it, spare it not, crucify it, and do not be afraid of being too cruel to it. Gal. v. 24. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Have no dependence on any worldly enjoyment whatsoever. Let salvation be the one thing with you. This is what is certainly required of you: and this is what many stick at; this giving up other things for salvation, is a stumbling-block that few get over. While others pressed into the kingdom of God at the preaching of John the Baptist, Herod was pretty much stirred up by his preaching. It is said, he heard him, and observed him, and did many things; but when he came to tell him that he must part with his beloved Herodias, here he stuck; this he never would yield to, Mark vii. 18—20. The rich young man was considerably concerned for salvation; and accordingly was a very strict liver in many things; but when Christ came to direct him to go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and follow him, he could not find in his heart to comply with it, but went away sorrowful. He had great possessions, and set his heart much on his estate, and could not bear to part with it. It may be, if Christ had directed him only to give away a considerable part of his estate, he would have done it; yea, perhaps, if he had bid him part with half of

it, he would have complied with it: but when he directed him to throw up all, he could not grapple with such a proposal. Herein the straitness of the gate very much consists; and it is on this account that so many seek to enter in, and are not able. There are many that have a great mind to salvation, and spend great part of their time in wishing that they had it, but they will not comply with the necessary means.

'2. Be directed to *forget the things that are behind;* that is, not to keep thinking and making much of what you have done, but let your mind be wholly intent on what you have to do. In some sense you ought to look back; you should look back on your sins. Jer. ii. 23. "See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done." You should look back on the wretchedness of your religious performances, and consider how you have fallen short in them; how exceedingly polluted all your duties have been, and how justly God might reject and loathe them, and you for them. But you ought not to spend your time in looking back, as many persons do, thinking how much they have done for their salvation; what great pains they have taken, how that they have done what they can, and do not see how they can do more; how long a time they have been seeking, and how much more they have done than others, and even than such and such who have obtained mercy. They think with themselves how hardly God deals with them, that he does not extend mercy to them, but turns a deaf ear to their cries; and hence discourage themselves, and complain of God. Do not thus spend your time in looking on what is past, but look forward, and consider what is before you; consider what it is that you can do, and what it is necessary that you should do, and what God calls you still to do, in order to your own salvation. The apostle, in the 3d chapter to the Philippians, tells us what things he did while a Jew, how much he had to boast of, if any could boast; but he tells us, that he forgot those things, and all others that were behind, and reached forth towards the things that were before, pressing forwards towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

3. Labour to get your *heart thoroughly disposed* to go on and hold out to the end. Many that seem to be earnest have not a heart thus disposed. It is a common thing for persons to appear greatly affected for a little while; but all is soon past away, and there is no more to be seen of it. Labour therefore to obtain a thorough willingness and preparation of spirit, to continue seeking, in the use of your utmost endeavours, without limitation; and do not think your whole life too long. And in order to this, be advised to two things.

(1.) Remember that if ever God bestows mercy upon you, he will use his sovereign pleasure about the *time when.* He will be-

stow it on some in a little time, and on others not till they have sought it long. If other persons are soon enlightened and comforted, while you remain long in darkness, there is no other way but for you to wait. God will act arbitrarily in this matter, and you cannot help it. You must even be content to wait, in a way of laborious and earnest striving, till his time comes. If you refuse, you will but undo yourself; and when you shall hereafter find yourself undone, and see that your case is past remedy, how will you condemn yourself for foregoing a great probability of salvation, only because you had not patience to hold out, and was not willing to be at the trouble of a persevering labour? And what will it avail before God or your own conscience to say, that you could not bear to be obliged to seek salvation so long, when God bestowed it on others that sought it but for a very short time? Though God may have bestowed the testimonies of his favour on others in a few days or hours after they have begun earnestly to seek it, how does that alter the case as to you, if there proves to be a necessity of your laboriously seeking many years before you obtain them? Is salvation less worth taking a great deal of pains for, because, through the sovereign pleasure of God, others have obtained it with comparatively little pains? If there are two persons, the one of which has obtained converting grace with comparative ease, and another that has obtained it after continuing for many years in the greatest and most earnest labours after it, how little difference does it make at last, when once salvation is obtained! Put all the *labour* and pains, the long continued difficulties and strugglings of the one in the scale against salvation, and how little does it subtract; and put the case with which the other has obtained in the scale with salvation, and how little does it add? What is either added or subtracted is lighter than vanity, and a thing worthy of no consideration, when compared with that infinite benefit that is obtained. Indeed if you were ten thousand years, and all that time should strive and press forward with as great earnestness as ever a person did for one day, all this would bear no proportion to the importance of the benefit; and it will doubtless appear little to you, when once you come to be in actual possession of eternal glory, and to see what that eternal misery is which you have escaped. You must not think much of your pains, and of the length of time; you must press towards the kingdom of God, and do your utmost, and hold out to the end, and learn to make no account of it when you have done. You must undertake the business of seeking salvation upon these terms, and with no other expectations than this, that if ever God bestows mercy it will be in his own time; and not only so, but also that when you have done all, God will not be [illegible] if obliged to shew you mercy at last.

(2.) Endeavour now thoroughly to weigh in your mind the difficulty, and to *count the cost* of perseverance in seeking salvation. You that are now setting out in this business, (as there are many here who have very lately set about it;—Praised be the name of God that he has stirred you up to it!) be exhorted to attend this direction. Do not undertake in this affair with any other thought, but of giving yourself wholly to it for the remaining part of your life, and going through many and great difficulties in it. Take heed that you do not engage secretly upon this condition, that you shall obtain in a little time, promising yourself that it shall be within this present season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, or with any other limitation of time whatsoever. Many, when they begin (seeming to set out very earnestly) do not expect that they shall need to seek very long, and so do not prepare themselves for it. And therefore, when they come to find it otherwise, and meet with unexpected difficulty, they are found unguarded, and easily overthrown. But let me advise you all who are now seeking salvation, not to entertain any self-flattering thoughts; but weigh the utmost difficulties of perseverance, and be provided for them, having your mind fixed in it to go through them, let them be what they will. Consider now beforehand, how tedious it would be, with utmost earnestness and labour, to strive after salvation for many years, in the meantime receiving no joyful or comfortable evidence of your having obtained. Consider what a great temptation to discouragement there probably would be in it; how apt you would be to yield the case; how ready to think that it is vain for you to seek any longer, and that God never intends to shew you mercy, in that he has not yet done it; how apt you would be to think with yourself, "What an uncomfortable life do I live! how much more unpleasantly do I spend my time than others that do not perplex their minds about the things of another world, but are at ease, and take the comfort of their worldly enjoyments!" Consider what a temptation there would probably be in it, if you saw others brought in that began to seek the kingdom of heaven long after you, rejoicing in a hope and sense of God's favour, after but little pains and a short time of awakening; while you, from day to day, and from year to year, seemed to labour in vain. Prepare for such temptations now. Lay in beforehand for such trials and difficulties, that you may not think any strange thing has happened when they come.

I hope that those who have given attention to what has been said, have by this time conceived, in some measure, what is signified by the expression in the text, and after what manner they ought to press into the kingdom of God. Here is this to induce you to a compliance with what you have been directed to; if you

sit still, you die; if you go backward, behold you shall surely die; if you go forward, you may live. And though God has not bound himself to any thing that a person does while destitute of faith, and out of Christ, yet there is great probability, that in a way of hearkening to this counsel you will live; and that by pressing onward, and persevering, you will at last, as as it were by violence, take the kingdom of heaven. Those of you who have not only heard the directions given, but shall, through God's merciful assistance, practise according to them, are those that probably will overcome. These we may well hope at last to see standing with the Lamb on Mount Sion, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands; when all your labour and toil will be abundantly compensated, and you will not repent that you have taken so much pains, and denied yourself so much, and waited so long. This self-denial, this waiting, will then look little, and vanish into nothing in your eyes, being all swallowed up in the first minute's enjoyment of that glory that you will then possess, and will uninterruptedly possess and enjoy to all eternity.

4th Direction. Improve the present season of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town. Prudence in any affair whatsoever consists very much in minding and improving our opportunities. If you would have spiritual prosperity, you must exercise prudence in the concerns of your souls, as well as in outward concerns when you seek outward prosperity. The prudent husbandman will observe his opportunities; he will improve seed-time and harvest; he will make his advantage of the showers and shines of heaven. The prudent merchant will discern his opportunities; he will not be idle on a market-day; he is careful not to let slip his seasons for enriching himself: So will those who prudently seek the fruits of righteousness, and the merchandise of wisdom, improve their opportunities for their eternal wealth and happiness.

God is pleased at this time, in a very remarkable manner, to pour out his Spirit amongst us; (glory be to his name!) You that have a mind to obtain converting grace, and to go to heaven when you die, now is your season! Now, if you have any sort of prudence for your own salvation, and have not a mind to go to hell, improve this season! Now is the accepted time! Now is the day of salvation! You that in time past have been called upon, and have turned a deaf ear to God's voice, and long stood out and resisted his commands and counsels, hear God's voice to-day, while it is called to-day! Do not harden your hearts at such a day as this! Now you have a special and remarkable price put into your hands to get wisdom, if you have but a heart to improve it.

God hath his certain days or appointed seasons of exercising both mercy and judgment. There are some remarkable times of wrath, laid out by God for his awful visitation, and the executions of his anger; which times are called days of vengeance, Prov. vi. 34. Wherein God will visit for sin, Exod. xxxii. 34. And so, on the contrary, God has laid out in his sovereign counsels, seasons of remarkable mercy, wherein he will manifest himself in the exercises of his grace and loving-kindness, more than at other times. Such times in scripture are called by way of eminency, accepted times, and days of salvation, and also days of God's visitation; because they are days wherein God will visit in a way of mercy; as Luke xix. 44. "And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." It is such a time now in this town; it is with us a day of God's gracious visitation. It is indeed a day of grace with us as long as we live in this world, in the enjoyment of the means of grace; but such a time as this, is especially, and in a distinguishing manner, a day of grace. There is a door of mercy always standing open for sinners; but at such a day as this, God opens an extraordinary door.

We are directed to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near, Isa. lv. 6. If you that are hitherto Christless, be not strangely besotted and infatuated, you will by all means improve such an opportunity as this to get heaven, when heaven is brought so near, when the fountain is opened in the midst of us in so extraordinary a manner. Now is the time to obtain a supply of the necessities of your poor perishing souls! This is the day for sinners that have a mind to be converted before they die, when God is dealing forth so liberally and bountifully amongst us; when conversion and salvation work is going on amongst us from sabbath to sabbath, and many are pressing into the kingdom of God! Now do not stay behind, but press in amongst the rest! Others have been stirred up to be in good earnest, and have taken heaven by violence; he entreated to follow their example, if you would have a part of the inheritance with them, and would not be left at the great day, when they are taken!

How should it move you to consider that you have this opportunity now in your hands! You are in the actual possession of it! If it were past, it would not be in your power to recover it, or in the power of any creature to bring it back for you; but it is not past; it is now, at this day. Now is the accepted time, even while it is called to-day! Will you sit still at such a time? Will you sleep in such a harvest? Will you deal with a slack hand

and stay behind out of mere sloth, or love to some lust, or loathness to grapple with some small difficulty, or to put yourself a little out of your way, when so many are flowing to the goodness of the Lord! You are behind still; and so you will be in danger of being left behind, when the whole number is completed that are to enter in, if you do not earnestly bestir yourself! To be left behind at the close of such a season as this, will be awful—next to being left behind on that day when God's saints shall mount up as with wings to meet the Lord in the air—and will be what will appear very threatening of it.

God is now calling you in an extraordinary manner: and it is agreeable to the will and word of Christ, that I should now, in his name, call you, as one set over you, and sent to you to that end; so it is his will that you should hearken to what I say, as his voice. I therefore beseech you in Christ's stead now to press into the kingdom of God! Whoever you are, whether young or old, small or great: if you are a great sinner, if you have been a backslider, if you have quenched the Spirit, be who you will, do not stand making objections, but arise, apply yourself to your work! Do what you have to do with your might. Christ is calling you before, and holding forth his grace, and everlasting benefits, and wrath is pursuing you behind; wherefore fly for your life, and look not behind you!

But here I would particularly direct myself to several sorts of persons.

I. To those sinners who are in a measure awakened, and are concerned for their salvation. You have reason to be glad that you have such an opportunity, and to prize it above gold. To induce you to prize and improve it, consider several things.

1. God has doubtless a design now to deal forth saving blessings to a number. God has done it to some already, and it is not probable that he has yet finished his work amongst us: we may well hope still to see others brought out of darkness into marvellous light. And therefore,

2. God comes this day, and knocks at many persons' doors, and at your door among the rest. God seems to be come in a very unusual manner amongst us, upon a gracious and merciful design; a design of saving a number of poor miserable souls out of a lost and perishing condition, and of bringing them into a happy state and eternal glory! This is offered to you, not only as it has always been in the word and ordinances, but by the particular influences of the Spirit of Christ awakening you! This special offer is made to many amongst us; and you are not passed over. Christ has not forgot you; but has come to your door; and there as it were stands waiting for you to open to him. If

you have wisdom and discretion to discern your own advantage, you will know that now is your opportunity.

How much more easily converting grace is obtained at such a time than at other times. The work is equally easy with God at all times; but there is far less difficulty in the way as to *men* at such a time, than at other times. It is, as I said before, a day of God's gracious visitation; a day that he has as it were set apart for the more liberally and bountifully dispensing of his grace; a day wherein God's hand is opened wide. Experience shews it. God seems to be more ready to help, to give proper convictions, to help against temptations, and let in divine light. He seems to carry on his work with a more glorious discovery of his power, and Satan is more chained up than at other times. Those difficulties and temptations that persons before stuck at, from year to year, they are soon helped over. The work of God is carried on with greater speed and swiftness, and there are often instances of sudden conversion at such a time. So it was in the apostles' days, when there was a time of the most extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit that ever was. How quick and sudden were conversions in those days! Such instances as that of the jailer abounded then, in fulfilment of that prophecy, Isai. lxvi. 7, 8. "Before she travailed, she brought forth: before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." So it is in some degree, whenever there is an extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God; more or less so, in proportion to the greatness of that effusion. There is seldom such quick work made of it at other times. Persons are not so soon delivered from their various temptations and entanglements; but are much longer wandering in a wilderness, and groping in darkness. And yet,

4. There are probably some here present that are now concerned about their salvation, that never will obtain. It is not to be supposed that all that are now moved and awakened will ever be savingly converted. Doubtless there are many now seeking that will not be able to enter. When has it been so in times past, when there have been times of great outpourings of God's Spirit, but that many who for a while have inquired with others, what they should do to be saved, have failed, and afterwards grown hard and secure? All of you that are now awakened, have a mind to obtain salvation, and probably hope to get a title to heaven, in the time of this present moving of God's Spirit: but yet, (though it be awful to be spoken, and awful to be thought,) we have no reason to think any other, than that some of you will burn in hell to all eternity. You all are afraid of hell, and seem at present disposed to take pains, to be delivered from it; and yet

it would be unreasonable to think any other, than that some of you will have your portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Though there are so many that seem to obtain so easily, having been but a little while under convictions, yet, for all that, some never will obtain. Some will soon lose the sense of things they now have; though their awakenings seem to be very considerable for the present, they will not hold; they have not hearts disposed to hold on through very many difficulties. Some that have set out for heaven, and hope as much as others to obtain, are indeed but slightly and slack, even now, in the midst of such a time as this. And others, who for the present seem to be more in earnest, will probably, before long, decline and fail, and gradually return to be as they were before. The convictions of some seem to be great, while that which is the occasion of their convictions is new; which, when that begins to grow old, will gradually decay and wear off. Thus, it may be, the occasion of your awakening has been the hearing of the conversion of some person, or seeing so extraordinary a dispensation of Providence as this in which God now appears amongst us; but by and by the newness and freshness of these things will be gone, and so will not affect your mind as now they do: and it may be your convictions will go away with it.

Though this be a time wherein God doth more liberally bestow his grace, and so a time of greater advantage for obtaining it; yet there seems to be, upon some accounts, greater danger of backsliding, than when persons are awakened at other times. For commonly such extraordinary times do not last long; and then when they cease, there are multitudes that lose their convictions as it were together.

We speak of it as a happy thing, that God is pleased to cause such a time amongst us; and so it is indeed; but there are some to whom it will be no benefit; it will be an occasion of their greater misery; they will wish they had never seen this time; it will be more tolerable for those that never saw it, or any thing like it, in the day of judgment, than for them. It is an awful consideration, that there are probably those here, whom the great Judge will hereafter call to a strict account about this very thing, why they no better improved this opportunity, when he set open the fountain of his grace, and so loudly called upon them, and came and strove with them in particular, by the awakening influences of his Spirit; and they will have no good account to give to the Judge, but their mouths will be stopped, and they will stand speechless before him.

You had need therefore to be earnest, and very resolved in this affair, that you may not be one of those who shall thus fail, that you

may so fight, as not uncertainly, and so run, as that you may win the prize.

5. Consider in what sad circumstances times of extraordinary effusion of God's Spirit commonly leave persons, when they leave them unconverted. They *find* them in a doleful, because in a natural condition; but commonly *leave* them in a much more doleful condition. They are left dreadfully hardened, and with a great increase of guilt, and their souls under a more strong dominion and possession of Satan. And frequently seasons of extraordinary advantage for salvation, when they pass over persons, and they do not improve them, nor receive any good in them, seal their damnation. As such seasons leave them, God for ever leaves them, and gives them up to judicial hardness. Luke xix. 41, 42. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

6. Consider, that it is very uncertain whether you will ever see such another time as this. If there should be such another time, it is very uncertain whether you will live to see it. Many that are now concerned for their salvation amongst us, will probably be in their graves, and it may be in hell before that time; and if you should miss this opportunity, it may be so with you. And what good will that do you, to have the Spirit of God poured out upon earth, in the place where you once lived, while you are tormented in hell? What will it avail you, that others are crying, What shall I do to be saved? while you are shut up for ever in the bottomless pit, and are wailing and gnashing your teeth in everlasting burnings?

Wherefore improve this opportunity, while God is pouring out his Spirit, and you are on earth, and while you dwell in that place where the Spirit of God is thus poured out, and you yourself have the awakening influences of it, that you may never wail and gnash your teeth in hell, but may sing in heaven, for ever, with others that are redeemed from amongst men, and redeemed amongst us.

7. If you should see another such time, it will be under far greater disadvantages than now. You will probably then be much older, and will have more hardened your heart; and so will be under less probability of receiving good. Some persons are so hardened in sin, and so left of God, that they can live through such a time as this, and not be much awakened or affected by it; they can stand their ground, and be but little moved. And so it may be with you, by another such time, if there should be another amongst us, and you should live to see it. The case in all pro-

bability will be greatly altered with you by that time. If you should continue Christless and graceless till then, you will be much further from the kingdom of God, and much deeper involved in snares and misery; and the devil will probably have a vastly greater advantage against you, to tempt and confound you.

8. We do not know but that God is now gathering in his elect, before some great and sore judgment. It has been God's manner before he casts off a visible people, or brings some great and destroying judgments upon them, first to gather in his elect, that they may be secure. So it was before the casting off the Jews from being God's people. There was first a very remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, and gathering in of the elect, by the preaching of the apostles and evangelists, as we read in the beginning of the Acts: but after this harvest and gleanings were over, the rest were blinded, and hardened; the gospel had little success amongst them, and the nation was given up, and cast off from being God's people, and their city and land was destroyed by the Romans in a terrible manner; and they have been cast off by God now for a great many ages, and still remain a hardened and rejected people. So we read in the beginning of the 7th chapter of the Revelations, that God, when about to bring destroying judgments on the earth, first sealed his servants in the forehead. He set his seal upon the hearts of the elect, gave them the saving influences and indwelling of his Spirit, by which they were sealed to the day of redemption. Rev. vii. 1—3. "And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their forehead."

And this may be the case now, that God is about, in a great measure, to forsake this land, and give up this people, and to bring most awful and overwhelming judgments upon it, and that he is now gathering in his elect, to secure them from the calamity. The state of the nation, and of this land, never looked so threatening of such a thing as at this day. The present aspect of things exceedingly threatens vital religion, and even those truths that are especially the foundation of it, out of this land. If it should be so, how awful will the case be with those that shall be left, and not brought in, while God continues the influences of his Spirit, to gather in those that are to be redeemed from amongst us!

9. If you neglect the present opportunity, and be finally unbelieving, those that are converted in this time of the pouring out of God's Spirit rise up in judgment against you. Your neighbours, your relations, acquaintance, or companions that are converted, will that day appear against you. They will not only be taken while you are left, mounting up with joy to meet the Lord in the air—at his right hand with glorious saints and angels, while you are at the left with devils—but they will rise up in judgment *against* you. However friendly you have been together, and have taken pleasure in one another's company, and have often familiarly conversed together, they will then surely appear against you. They will rise up as witnesses, and will declare what a precious opportunity you had, and did not improve; how you continued unbelieving, and rejected the offers of a Saviour, when those offers were made in so extraordinary a manner, and when so many others were prevailed upon to accept of Christ; how you was negligent and slack, and did not know the things that belonged to your peace, in that your day. And not only so, but they shall be your judges, as assessors with the great Judge; and as such, will appear against you; they will be with the Judge in passing sentence upon you. 1 Cor. vi. 2. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" Christ will admit them to the honour of judging the world with him: "They shall sit with him in his throne." Rev. iii. 21. They shall sit with Christ in his throne of government, and they shall sit with him in his throne of judgment, and shall be judges with him when you are judged, and as such shall condemn you.

10. And *lastly*, You do not know that you shall live through the present time of the pouring out of God's Spirit. You may be taken away in the midst of it, or you may be taken away in the beginning of it; as God in his providence is putting you in mind, by the late instance of death in a young person in the town*. God has of late been very awful in his dealings with us, in the repeated deaths of young persons amongst us. This should stir every one up to be in the more haste to press into the kingdom of God, that so you may be safe whenever death comes. This is a blessed season and opportunity; but you do not know how little of it you may have. You may have much less of it than others; may by death be suddenly snatched away from all advantages that are here enjoyed for the good of souls. Therefore make haste, and escape for thy life. One moment's delay is dangerous; for wrath is pursuing, and divine vengeance hanging over every uncovered person.

* Joseph Clark's wife, a young woman lately married, that died suddenly, the week before this was delivered.

Let these considerations move every one to be improving this opportunity, that while others receive saving good, and are made heirs of eternal glory, you may not be left behind, in the same miserable doleful circumstances in which you came into the world, a poor captive to sin and Satan, a lost sheep, a perishing undone creature, sinking down into everlasting perdition; that you may not be one of them spoken of, Jer. xvii. 6. "That shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see good when good comes." If you do not improve this opportunity, remember I have told you, you will hereafter lament it; and if you do not lament it in this world, then I will leave it with you to remember it throughout a miserable eternity.

II. I would address myself to such as yet remain unawakened. It is an awful thing that there should be any one person remaining secure amongst us at such a time as this; but yet it is to be feared that there are some of this sort. I would here a little expostulate with such persons.

1. When do you expect that it will be more likely that you should be awakened and wrought upon than now? You are in a Christless condition; and yet without doubt intend to go to heaven; and therefore intend to be converted some time before you die; but this is not to be expected till you are first awakened, and deeply concerned about the welfare of your soul, and brought earnestly to seek God's converting grace. And when do you intend that this shall be? How do you lay things out in your own mind, or what projection have you about this matter? Is it ever so likely that a person will be awakened, as at such a time as this? How do we see many, who before were secure, now roused out of their sleep, and crying, What shall I do to be saved? But you are yet secure! Do you flatter yourself that it will be more likely you should be awakened when it is a dull and dead time? Do you lay matters out thus in your own mind, that though you are senseless when others are generally awakened, that yet you shall be awakened when others are generally senseless? Or do you hope to see another such time of the pouring out of God's Spirit hereafter? And do you think it will be more likely that you should be wrought upon then, than now? And why do you think so? Is it because then you shall be so much older than you are now, and so that your heart will be grown softer and more tender with age; or because you will then have stood out so much longer against the calls of the gospel, and all means of grace? Do you think it more likely that God will give you the needed influences of his Spirit then, than now, because then you will have provoked him so much more, and your sin and guilt will be so much greater? And do you think it will be any

benefit to you, to stand it out through the present season of grace, as proof against the extraordinary means of awakening there are? Do you think that this will be a good preparation for a saving work of the Spirit hereafter?

2. What means do you expect to be awakened by? As to the awakening awful things of the word of God, you have had those set before you times without number, in the most moving manner that the dispensers of the word have been capable of. As to particular solemn warnings, directed to those that are in your circumstances, you have had them frequently, and have them now from time to time. Do you expect to be awakened by awful providences? Those also you have lately had, of the most awakening nature, one after another. Do you expect to be moved by the deaths of others? We have lately had repeated instances of these. There have been deaths of old and young: The year has been remarkable for the deaths of young persons in the bloom of life; and some of them very sudden deaths. Will the conversion of others move you? There is indeed scarce any thing that is found to have so great a tendency to stir persons up as this: And this you have been tried with of late in frequent instances; but are hitherto proof against it. Will a general pouring out of the Spirit, and seeing a concern about salvation amongst all sorts of people, do it? This means you now have, but without effect. Yea, you have all these things together; you have the solemn warnings of God's word, and awful instances of death, and the conversion of others, and see a general concern about salvation: But all together do not move you to any great concern about your own precious, immortal, and miserable soul. Therefore consider by what means it is that you expect ever to be awakened.

You have heard that it is probable some who are now awakened, will never obtain salvation: how dark then does it look upon you that remain stupidly unawakened! Those who are not moved at such a time as this, come to adult age, have reason to fear whether they are not given up to judicial hardness. I do not say they have reason to *conclude* it, but they have reason to fear it. How dark doth it look upon you, that God comes and knocks at so many persons' doors, and misses yours! that God is giving the strivings of his Spirit so generally amongst us, while you are left senseless!

3. Do you expect to obtain salvation without ever seeking it? If you are sensible that there is a necessity of your seeking in order to obtaining, and never intend to seek, one would think you could not avoid it at such a time as this. Inquire therefore, whether you intend to go to heaven, living all your days a secure, negligent, careless life.——Or,

4. Do you think you can bear the damnation of hell? Do you imagine that you can tolerably endure the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings? Do you hope that you shall be able to grapple with the vengeance of God Almighty, when he girds himself with strength, and clothes himself with wrath? Do you think to strengthen yourself against God, and to be able to make your part good with him? 1 Cor. x. 22. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" Do you flatter yourself that you shall find out ways for your ease and support, and to make it out tolerably well, to bear up your spirit in those everlasting burnings that are prepared for the devil and his angels? Ezek. xxii. 14. "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?"—It is a difficult thing to conceive what such Christless persons think, that are unconcerned at such a time.

III. I would direct myself to them who are grown considerably into years, and are yet in a natural condition. I would now take occasion earnestly to exhort you to improve this extraordinary opportunity, and press into the kingdom of God. You have lost many advantages that once you had, and now have not the same advantages that others have. The case is very different with you from what it is with many of your neighbours. You, above all, had need to improve such an opportunity. Now is the time for you to bestir yourself, and take the kingdom of heaven!—Consider,

1. Now there seems to be a door opened for old sinners. Now God is dealing forth freely to all sorts: his hand is opened wide, and he does not pass by old ones so much as he used to do. You are not under such advantages as others who are younger; but yet, so wonderfully has God ordered it, that now you are not destitute of great advantage. Though old in sin, God has put a new and extraordinary advantage into your hands. O! improve this price you have to get wisdom! You that have been long seeking to enter in at the strait gate, and yet remain without, now take your opportunity and press in! You that have been long in the wilderness, fighting with various temptations, labouring under discouragements, ready to give up the case, and have been often tempted to despair, now, behold the door that God opens for you! Do not give way to discouragements now; this is not a time for it. Do not spend time in thinking, that you have done what you can already, and that you are not elected, and in giving way to other perplexing, weakening, disheartening temptations. Do not waste away this precious opportunity in such a manner. You have no time to spare for such things as these; God calls you now to some-

thing else. Improve this time in seeking and striving for salvation, and not in that which tends to hinder it. It is no time now for you to stand talking with the devil; but hearken to God, and apply yourself to that which he does now so loudly call you to.

Some of you have often lamented the loss of past opportunities, particularly, the loss of the time of youth, and have been wishing that you had so good an opportunity again; and have been ready to say, "O! if I was young again, how would I improve such an advantage!" That opportunity which you have had in time past is irrecoverable; you can never have it again: but God can give you other advantages of another sort, that are very great, and he is so doing at this day. He is now putting a new opportunity into your hands, though not of the same kind with that which you once had, and have lost, yet in some respects as great of another kind. If you lament your folly in neglecting and losing past opportunities, then do not be guilty of the folly of neglecting the opportunity which God now gives you. This opportunity you could not have purchased, if you would have given all that you had in the world for it. But God is putting it into your hands himself, of his own free and sovereign mercy, without your purchasing it. Therefore when you have it, do not neglect it.

2. It is a great deal more likely with respect to such persons than others, that this is their last time. There will be a last time of special offer of salvation to impenitent sinners.—"God's Spirit shall not always strive with man," Gen. vi. 3. God sometimes continues long knocking at the doors of wicked men's hearts; but there are the *last* knocks, and the *last* calls, that ever they shall have. And sometimes God's last calls are the loudest; and then if sinners do not hearken, he finally leaves them. How long has God been knocking at many of your doors that are old in sin! It is a great deal more likely that these are his last knocks. You have resisted God's Spirit in times past, and have hardened your heart once and again; but God will not be thus dealt with always. There is danger, that if now, after so long a time, you will not hearken, he will utterly desert you, and leave you to walk in your own counsels.

It seems, by God's providence, as though God had yet an elect number amongst old sinners in this place, that perhaps he is now about to bring in. It looks as though there were some that long lived under Mr. STODDARD'S ministry, that God has not utterly cast off, though they stood it out under such great means as they then enjoyed. It is to be hoped that God will now bring in a remnant from among them. But it is the more likely that God is now about finishing with them, one way or other, for their having been so long the subjects of such extraordinary means. You have seen former times of the pouring out of God's Spirit upon

the town, when others were taken and you left, others were called out of darkness into marvellous light, and were brought into a glorious and happy state, and you saw not good when good came. How dark will your circumstances appear, if you shall also stand it out through this opportunity, and still be left behind! Take heed that you be not of those spoken of, Heb. vi. 7, 8. that are like the "earth that has rain coming oft upon it, and only bears briers and thorns." As we see there are some pieces of ground, the more showers of rain fall upon them, the more fruitful seasons there are, the more do the briers, and other useless and hurtful plants, that are rooted in them, grow and flourish. Of such ground the apostle says, "It is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." The way that the husbandman takes with such ground, is, to set fire to it, to burn up the growth of it.—If you miss this opportunity, there is danger that you will be utterly rejected, and that your end will be to be burned. And if this is to be, it is to be feared, that you are not far from, but nigh unto cursing.

Those of you that are already grown old in sin, and are now under awakenings, when you feel your convictions begin to go off, if ever that should be, then remember what you have now been told: it may well then strike you to the heart!

IV. I would direct the advice to those that are young, and now under their first special convictions. I would earnestly urge such to improve this opportunity, and press into the kingdom of God. Consider two things:

1. You have all manner of advantages now centering upon you. It is a time of great advantage for all; but your advantages are above others. There is no other sort of persons that have now so great and happy an opportunity as you have. You have the great advantage that is common to all who live in this place, *viz.* That now it is a time of the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God. And have you not that great advantage, the awakening influences of the Spirit of God on you in particular? and besides, you have this peculiar advantage, that you are now in your youth. And added to this you have another unspeakable advantage, that you now are under your first convictions. Happy is he that never has hardened his heart, and blocked up his own way to heaven by backsliding, and has now the awakening influences of God's Spirit, if God does but enable him thoroughly to improve them! Such, above all in the world, bid fair for the kingdom of God. God is wont on such, above any kind of persons, as it were easily and readily to bestow the saving grace and comforts of his Spirit. Instances of speedy and sudden

conversion are most commonly found among such. Happy are they that have the Spirit of God with them, and never have quenched it, if they did but know the price they have in their hands!

If you have a sense of your necessity of salvation, and the great worth and value of it, you will be willing to take the surest way to it, or that which has the greatest probability of success; and that certainly is, thoroughly to improve your first convictions.—If you do so, it is not likely that you will fail; there is the greatest probability that you will succeed. What is it not worth, to have such an advantage in one's hands for obtaining eternal life? The present season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, is the first that many of you who are now under awakenings have ever seen, since you came to years of understanding. On which account, it is the greatest opportunity that ever you have had, and probably by far the greatest that ever you will have. There are many here present who wish they had such an opportunity, but they never can obtain it; they cannot buy it for money; but you have it in your possession, and can improve it if you will. But yet,

2. There is on some accounts greater danger that such as are in your circumstances will fail of thoroughly improving their convictions, with respect to stedfastness and perseverance, than others. Those that are young are more unstable than elder persons. They who never had convictions before, have less experience of the difficulty of the work they have engaged in; they are more ready to think that they shall obtain salvation easily, and are more easily discouraged by disappointments: and young persons have less reason and consideration to fortify them against temptations to backsliding. You should therefore labour now the more to guard against such temptations. By all means make but one work of seeking salvation! Make thorough work of it the first time! There are vast disadvantages that they bring themselves under, who have several turns of seeking with great intermissions. By such a course, persons exceedingly wound their own souls, and entangle themselves in many snares. Who are those that commonly meet with so many difficulties, and are so long labouring in darkness and perplexity, but those who have had several turns at seeking salvation; who have one while had convictions, and then have quenched them, and then have set about the work again, and have backslidden again, and have gone on after that manner? The children of Israel would not have been forty years in the wilderness, if they had held their courage, and had gone on as they set out; but they were of an unstable mind, and were for going back again into Egypt. Otherwise, if they had gone right forward without discouragement, as

God would have led them, they would have soon entered and taken possession of Canaan. They had got to the very borders of it when they turned back, but were thirty-eight years after that, before they got through the wilderness. Therefore, as you regard the interest of your soul, do not run yourself into a like difficulty, by unsteadiness, intermission, and backsliding; but press right forward, from henceforth, and make but one work of seeking, converting, and pardoning grace, however great and difficult, and long a work that may be.

DISCOURSE III.

RUTH'S RESOLUTION.

RUTH i. 16.

And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

THE historical things in this book of Ruth, seem to be inserted in the canon of the scripture, especially on two accounts:

First, Because Christ was of Ruth's posterity. The Holy Ghost thought fit to take particular notice of that marriage of Boaz with Ruth, whence sprang the Saviour of the world. We may often observe it, that the Holy Spirit who indited the scriptures, often takes notice of little things, or minute occurrences, that do but remotely relate to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Because this history seems to be typical of the calling of the Gentile church, and indeed of the conversion of every believer. Ruth was not originally of Israel, but was a Moabitess, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel: but she forsook her own people, and the idols of the Gentiles, to worship the God of Israel, and to join herself to that people. Herein she seems to be a type of the Gentile church, and also of every sincere convert. Ruth was the remote mother of Christ; he came of her posterity: so the Church is Christ's mother, as she is represented, Rev. xii. at the beginning. And so also is every true Christian his mother. Matth. xii. 50. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Christ is what the soul is in travail with, at the new birth. Ruth forsook all her natural relations, and her own

country, the land of her nativity, and all her former possessions there, for the sake of the God of Israel; as every true Christian forsakes all for Christ. Psalm xlv. 10. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house."

Naomi was now returning out of the land of Moab, into the land of Israel, with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth; who will represent to us two sorts of professors of religion: Orpah, those who indeed make a fair profession, and seem to set out well, but continue only for a while, and then turn back; Ruth, those who are sound and sincere, and therefore are stedfast and persevering in their way. Naomi, in the preceding verses, represents to her daughters the difficulties of their leaving their own country to go with her. And in this verse may be observed,

1. The remarkable conduct and behaviour of Ruth on this occasion; with what inflexible resolution she cleaves to Naomi, and follows her. When Naomi first rose to return from the country of Moab into the land of Israel, Orpah and Ruth both set out with her; and Naomi exhorts them both to return. And both wept, and seemed as if they could not bear the thoughts of leaving her, and appeared as if they were resolved to go with her. Verse 10. "And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." Then Naomi says to them again, "Turn again, my daughters, go your way," &c. And then they were greatly affected again, and Orpah returned and went back. Now Ruth's stedfastness in her purpose had a greater trial, but yet is not overcome: "She clave unto her," verse 14. Then Naomi speaks to her again, verse 15. "Behold thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law." And then she shews her immoveable resolution in the text and following verse.

2. I would particularly observe that wherein the virtuousness of this her resolution consists, *viz.* that it was for the sake of the God of Israel, and that she might be one of his people, that she was thus resolved to cleave to Naomi: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." It was for God's sake that she did thus; and therefore her so doing is afterwards spoken of as a virtuous behaviour in her, chap. ii. 11, 12. "And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." She left her father and mother,

and the land of her nativity, to come and trust under the shadow of God's wings; and she had indeed a full reward given her, as Boaz wished; for besides immediate spiritual blessings to her own soul, and eternal rewards in another world, she was rewarded with plentiful and prosperous outward circumstances in the family of Boaz. And God raised up David and Solomon of her seed, and established the crown of Israel (the people that she chose before her own people) in her posterity; and, which is much more, of her seed he raised up Jesus Christ, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

From the words thus opened, I observe this for the subject of my present discourse:—"When those that we have formerly been conversant with, are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, it ought to be our firm resolution, that we will not leave them; but that their people shall be our people, and their God our God."

It sometimes happens, that of those who have been conversant one with another—who have dwelt together as neighbours, and have been often together as companions, or united in their relation, and have been together in darkness, bondage, and misery, in the service of Satan—some are enlightened, and have their minds changed, are made to see the great evil of sin, and have their hearts turned to God. They are influenced by the holy Spirit of God, to leave their company that are on Satan's side, and to join themselves with that blessed company that are with Jesus Christ. They are made willing to forsake the tents of wickedness, to dwell in the land of uprightness with the people of God.

And sometimes this proves a final parting or separation between them and those with whom they have been formerly conversant. Though it may be no parting in outward respects, they may still dwell and converse one with another; yet in other respects, it sets them at a great distance. One is a child of God, and the other his enemy; one is in a miserable, and the other in a happy condition; one is a citizen of the heavenly Zion, the other is under condemnation to hell. They are no longer together in those respects wherein they used to be together: They used to be of one mind to serve sin, and do Satan's work; now they are of contrary minds. They used to be together in worldliness and sinful vanity; now they are of exceeding different dispositions. They are separated as they are in different kingdoms: the one remains in the kingdom of darkness, the other is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And sometimes they are finally separated in these respects: while one dwells in the land of Israel, and in the house of God; the other, like Orpah, lives and dies in the land of Moab.

Now it is lamentable, it is awful being parted so. It is doleful, when of those who have formerly been together in sin, some turn to God, and join themselves with his people, that it should prove a *parting* between them and their former companions and acquaintance. It should be our firm and inflexible resolution in such a case, that it shall be no parting, but that we will follow them, that their people shall be our people, and their God our God; and that for the following reasons:

I. Because their *God* is a glorious God. There is none like him, who is infinite in glory and excellency. He is the most high God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. His name is excellent in all the earth, and his glory is above the heavens. Among the gods there is none like unto him; there is none in heaven to be compared to him, nor are there any among the sons of the mighty that can be likened unto him. Their God is the fountain of all good, and an inexhaustible fountain; he is an all-sufficient God, able to protect and defend them, and do all things for them. He is the king of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: A strong rock, and an high tower. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heaven in their help, and in his excellency on the sky: The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms. He is a God who hath all things in his hands, and does whatsoever he pleases: he killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up; he maketh poor and maketh rich: The pillars of the earth are the Lord's. Their God is an infinitely holy God; There is none holy as the Lord. And he is infinitely good and merciful. Many that others worship and serve as gods, are cruel beings, spirits that seek the ruin of souls; but this is a God that delighteth in mercy; his grace is infinite, and endures for ever. He is love itself, an infinite fountain and ocean of it.

Such a God is their God! Such is the excellency of Jacob! Such is the God of them who have forsaken their sins and are converted! They have made a wise choice who have chosen this for their God. They have made a happy exchange indeed, that have exchanged sin, and the world, for such a God!

They have an excellent and glorious Saviour, who is the only begotten Son of God; the brightness of his Father's glory; one in whom God from eternity had infinite delight; a Saviour of infinite love; one that has shed his own blood, and made his soul an offering for their sins, and one that is able to save them to the uttermost.

II. Their *people* are an excellent and happy people. God has renewed them, and stamped his own image upon them, and made

them partakers of his holiness. They are more excellent than their neighbours, Prov. xii. 26. Yea, they are the excellent of the earth, Psalm. xvi. 3. They are lovely in the sight of the angels; and they have their souls adorned with those graces that in the sight of God himself are of great price.

The people of God are the most excellent and happy society in the world. That God whom they have chosen for their God, is their father; he has pardoned all their sins, and they are at peace with him; and he has admitted them to all the privileges of his children. As they have devoted themselves to God, so he has given himself to them. He is become their salvation, and their portion: His power and mercy, and all his attributes, are theirs. They are in a safe state, free from all possibility of perishing: Satan has no power to destroy them. God carries them on eagles' wings, far above Satan's reach, and above the reach of all the enemies of their souls. God is with them in this world; they have his gracious presence. God is for them; Who then can be against them? As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah is round about them. God is their shield, and their exceeding great reward; and their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: And they have the divine promise and oath, that in the world to come they shall dwell for ever in the glorious presence of God.

It may well be sufficient to induce us to resolve to cleave to those that forsake their sins and idols to join themselves with this people, that God is with them, Zech. viii. 23. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." So should persons, as it were, take hold of the skirt of their neighbours and companions that have turned to God, and resolve that they will go with them, because God is with them.

III. *Happiness* is no where else to be had, but in their God, and with their people. There are that are called gods many, and lords many. Some make gods of their pleasures: some choose Mammon for their god, some make gods of their own supposed excellencies, or the outward advantages they have above their neighbours: some choose one thing for their god, and others another. But men can be happy in no other but the God of Israel: He is the only fountain of happiness. Other gods cannot help in calamity; nor can any of them afford what the poor empty soul stands in need of. Let men adore those other gods never so much, and call upon them never so earnestly, and serve them never so diligently, they will nevertheless remain poor, wretched,

unsatisfied, undone creatures. All other people are miserable, but that people whose God is the Lord.—The world is divided into two societies: *The people of God*, the little flock of Jesus Christ, that company that we read of, Rev. xiv. 4. "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb:" And *those that belong to the kingdom of darkness*, that are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. All that are of this latter company are wretched and undone; they are the enemies of God, and under his wrath and condemnation. They are the devil's slaves, that serve him blindfold, and are befooled and ensnared by him, and hurried along in the broad way to eternal perdition.

IV. When those that we have formerly been conversant with are turning to God and to his people, their *example* ought to influence us. Their example should be looked upon as the call of God to us, to do as they have done. God, when he changes the heart of one, calls upon another; especially does he loudly call on those that have been their friends and acquaintance. We have been influenced by their examples in evil; and shall we cease to follow them, when they make the wisest choice that ever they made, and do the best thing that ever they did? If we have been companions with them in worldliness, in vanity, in unprofitable and sinful conversation, it will be a hard case, if there must be a parting now, because we are not willing to be companions with them in holiness and true happiness. Men are greatly influenced by seeing one another's prosperity in other things. If those whom they have been much conversant with, grow rich, and obtain any great earthly advantages, it awakens their ambition, and eager desire after the like prosperity: How much more should they be influenced, and stirred up to follow them, and be like them, when they obtain that spiritual and eternal happiness, that is of infinitely more worth, than all the prosperity and glory of this world?

V. Our *resolutions* to cleave to and follow those that are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, ought to be *fixed* and strong, because of the great difficulty of it. If we will cleave to them, and have their God for our God, and their people for our people, we must mortify and deny all our lusts, and cross every evil appetite and inclination, and for ever part with all sin. But our lusts are many and violent. Sin is naturally exceeding dear to us: to part with it is compared to plucking out our right eyes.

Men may refrain from wonted ways of sin for a little while, and may deny their lusts in a partial degree, with less difficulty; but it is heart-rending work, finally to part with all sin, and to give our dearest lusts a bill of divorce, utterly to send them away. But this we must do, if we would follow those that are truly turning to God: Yea, we must not only forsake sin, but must, in a sense, forsake all the world. Luke xiv. 33. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." That is, he must forsake all in his heart, and must come to a thorough disposition and readiness actually to quit all for God, and the glorious spiritual privileges of his people, whenever the case may require it; and that without any prospect of any thing of the like nature, or any worldly thing whatsoever, to make amends for it; and all to go into a strange country, a land that has hitherto been unseen; like Abraham, who being called of God, "went out of his own country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, for a land that God should shew him, not knowing whither he went."

Thus, it was a hard thing for Ruth to forsake her native country, her father and mother, her kindred and acquaintance, and all the pleasant things she had in the land of Moab, to dwell in the land of Israel, where she never had been. Naomi told her of the difficulties once and again. They were too hard for her sister Orpah; the consideration of them turned her back after she was set out. Her resolution was not firm enough to overcome them. But so firmly resolved was Ruth, that she brake through all; she was stedfast in it, that, let the difficulty be what it would, she would not leave her mother-in-law. So persons had need to be very firm in their resolution to conquer the difficulties that are in the way of cleaving to them who are indeed turning from sin to God.

Our cleaving to them, and having their God for our God, and their people for our people, depends on our resolution and choice; and that in two respects.

1. The firmness of resolution in using means in order to it, is the way to have means effectual. There are means appointed in order to our becoming some of the true Israel, and having their God for our God; and the thorough use of these means is the way to have success; but not a slack or slighty use of them. And that we may be thorough, there is need of strength of resolution, a firm and inflexible disposition, and bent of mind to be universal in the use of means, and to do what we do with our might, and to persevere in it. Matth. xi. 12. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

2. A choosing of their God, and their people, with a full determination, and with the whole soul, is the condition of an union with them. God gives every man his choice in this matter: as Orpah and Ruth had their choice, whether they would go with Naomi into the land of Israel, or stay in the land of Moab. A natural man may choose deliverance from hell; but no man doth ever heartily choose God and Christ, and the spiritual benefits that Christ has purchased, and the happiness of God's people, till he is converted. On the contrary, he is averse to them; he has no relish of them; and is wholly ignorant of their inestimable worth and value.

Many carnal men seem to choose these things, but do it not really; as Orpah seemed at first to choose to forsake Moab to go into the land of Israel. But when Naomi came to set before her the difficulty of it, she went back; and thereby shewed that she was not fully determined in her choice, and that her whole soul was not in it as Ruth's was.

APPLICATION.

The use that I shall make of what has been said, is to move sinners to this resolution, with respect to those amongst us that have lately turned to God, and joined themselves to the flock of Christ. Through the abundant mercy and grace of God to us in this place, it may be said of many of you that are in a Christless condition, that you have lately been left by those that were formerly with you in such a state. Some of those with whom you have formerly been conversant, have lately forsaken a life of sin and the service of Satan, and have turned to God, and fled to Christ, and joined themselves to that blessed company that are with him. They formerly were with you in sin and in misery; but now they are with you no more in that state or manner of life. They are changed, and have fled from the wrath to come: they have chosen a life of holiness here, and the enjoyment of God hereafter. They were formerly your associates in bondage, and were with you in Satan's business; but now you have their company no longer in these things. Many of you have seen those you live with, under the same roof, turning from being any longer with you in sin, to be with the people of Jesus Christ. Some of you that are husbands, have had your wives; and some of you that are wives, have had your husbands; some of you that are children, have had your parents; and parents have had your children; many of you have had your brothers and sisters; and many your near neighbours, and acquaintance, and special friends; many of you that are young have had your companions: I say,

many of you have had those that you have been concerned with, leaving you, forsaking that doleful life, and wretched state in which you still continue. God, of his good pleasure and wonderful grace, hath lately caused in this place multitudes to forsake their old abodes in the land of Moab, and under the gods of Moab, and go into the land of Israel, to put their trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel. Though you and they have been nearly related, and have dwelt together, or have been often together and intimately acquainted, they have been taken, and you hitherto left! Oh! let it not be the foundation of a final parting! But earnestly follow them; be firm in your resolution in this matter. Do not as Orpah did, who, though at first she made as though she would follow Naomi, yet when she had the difficulty set before her, went back. But say as Ruth, "I will not leave thee; but where thou goest, I will go: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Say as she said, and do as she did. Consider the excellency of their God, and their Saviour, and the happiness of their people, the blessed state that they are in, and the doleful state you are in.

You who are *old* sinners, who have lived long in the service of Satan, have lately seen some that have travelled with you in the paths of sin these many years, turning to God. They with you enjoyed great means and advantages, had calls and warnings with you, and with you passed through remarkable times of the pouring out of God's Spirit in this place, and hardened their hearts and stood it out with you, and with you have grown old in sin; yet you have seen some of them turning to God, *i. e.* you have seen those evidences of it in them, whence you may rationally judge that it is so. Oh! let it not be a final parting! You have been thus long together in sin and under condemnation: let it be your firm resolution, that, if possible, you will be with them still, now they are in a holy and happy state, and that you will follow them into the holy and pleasant land.—You that tell of your having been seeking salvation for many years, (though without doubt, in a poor dull way, in comparison of what you ought to have done,) have seen some old sinners and old seekers, as you are, obtaining mercy. God has lately roused them from their dulness and caused them to alter their hand, and put them on more thorough endeavours; and they have now, after so long a time, heard God's voice, and have fled for refuge to the rock of ages. Let this awaken earnestness and resolution in you. Resolve that you will not leave them.

You who are in your *youth*, how many have you seen of your age and standing, that have of late hopefully chosen God for their God, and Christ for their Saviour! You have followed them in sin, and have perhaps followed them into vain company; and will

you not now follow them to Christ? And you who are *children*, know that there have lately been some of your sort who have repented of their sins, loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusted in him, and are become God's children, as we have reason to hope. Let it stir you up to resolve to your utmost to seek and cry to God, that you may have the like change made in your hearts, that their people may be your people, and their God your God.

You who are great sinners, who have made yourselves distinguishingly guilty by the wicked practices you have lived in, know that there are some of your sort who have lately (as we have reason to hope) had their hearts broken for sin, and have forsaken it and trusted in the blood of Christ for the pardon of it. They have chosen a holy life, and have betaken themselves to the ways of wisdom: let it excite and encourage you resolutely to cleave to them, and earnestly to follow them.

Let the following things be considered:

1. That your soul is as precious as theirs. It is immortal as theirs is; and stands in as much need of happiness, and can as ill bear eternal misery. You was born in the same miserable condition that they were, having the same wrath of God abiding on you. You must stand before the same Judge; who will be as strict in judgment with you as with them; and your own righteousness will stand you in no more stead before him than theirs; and therefore you stand in as absolute necessity of a Saviour as they. Carnal confidences can no more answer your end than theirs; nor can this world or its enjoyments serve to make you happy without God and Christ, more than them. When the bridegroom comes, the foolish virgins stand in as much need of oil as the wise, Matth. xxv. at the beginning.

2. Unless you follow them in their turning to God, their conversion will be a foundation of an eternal separation between you and them. You will be in different interests, and in exceeding different states, as long as you live; they the children of God, and you the children of Satan; and you will be parted in another world; when you come to die, there will be a vast separation made between you. Luke xvi. 26. "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." And you will be parted at the day of judgment. You will be parted at Christ's first appearance in the clouds of heaven. While they are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be ever with the Lord, you will remain below, confined to this cursed ground, that is kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. You will appear separated from them, while you stand before the great judgment-seat, they being at the right hand,

while you are set at the left. Matth. xxv. 32, 33. "And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." And you shall then appear in exceeding different circumstances: While you stand with devils, in the image and deformity of devils, and in ineffable horror and amazement, they shall appear in glory, sitting on thrones, as assessors with Christ, and as such passing judgment upon you, 1 Cor. vi. 2. And what shame and confusion will then cover you, when so many of your contemporaries, your equals, your neighbours, relations and companions, shall be honoured, and openly acknowledged, and confessed by the glorious Judge of the universe, and Redeemer of saints, and shall be seen by you sitting with him in such glory. You shall appear to have neglected your salvation, and not to have improved your opportunities, and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, the same person that will then appear as your great judge, and you shall be the subjects of wrath, and, as it were, trodden down in eternal contempt and disgrace! Dan. xii. 2. "Some shall rise to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And what a wide separation will the sentence then passed and executed make between you and them? When you shall be sent away out of the presence of the Judge with indignation and abhorrence, as cursed and loathsome creatures; they shall be sweetly accosted and invited into his glory as his dear friends, and the blessed of his Father! When *you*, with all that vast throng of wicked and accursed men and devils, shall descend with loud lamentings, and horrid shrieks, into that dreadful gulph of fire and brimstone, and shall be swallowed up in that great and everlasting furnace; *they* shall joyfully, and with sweet songs of glory and praise, ascend with Christ, and all that beauteous and blessed company of saints and angels, into eternal felicity, in the glorious presence of God, and the sweet embraces of his love. You and they shall spend eternity in such a separation, and immensely different circumstances! You have been intimately acquainted and nearly related, closely united and mutually conversant in this world; and you have taken delight in each other's company! And shall it be—after you have been together a great while, each of you in undoing yourselves, enhancing your guilt, and heaping up wrath—that their so wisely changing their minds and their course, and choosing such happiness for themselves, should now at length be the beginning of such an exceeding and everlasting separation between you and them? How awful will it be to be parted so!

3. Consider the great encouragement that God gives you earnestly to strive for the same blessing that others have obtained. There is great encouragement in the word of God to sinners to

seek salvation, in the revelation we have of the abundant provision made for the salvation even of the chief of sinners, and in the appointment of so many means to be used with and by sinners, in order to their salvation; and by the blessing which God in his word connects with the means of his appointment. There is hence great encouragement for all, at all times, that will be thorough in using of these means. But now God gives extraordinary encouragement in his providence, by pouring out his Spirit so remarkably amongst us, and bringing savingly home to himself all sorts, young and old, rich and poor, wise and unwise, sober and vicious, old self-righteous seekers, and profligate livers: No sort are exempt. There is at this day amongst us the loudest call, and the greatest encouragement, and the widest door opened to sinners, to escape out of a state of sin and condemnation, that perhaps God ever granted in New England. Who is there that has an immortal soul, so sottish as not to improve such an opportunity, and that will not bestir himself, with all his might? How unreasonable is negligence, and how exceeding unreasonable is discouragement, at such a day as this! Will you be so stupid as to neglect your soul now! Will any mortal amongst us be so unreasonable as to lag behind, or look back in discouragement, when God opens such a door? Let every person be thoroughly awake! Let every one encourage himself now to press forward, and fly for his life!

4. Consider how earnestly desirous they that have obtained are that you should follow them, and that their people should be your people, and their God your God. They desire that you should partake of that great good which God has given them, and that unspeakable and eternal blessedness which he has promised them. They wish and long it. If you do not go with them, and are not still of their company, it will not be for want of their willingness, but your own. That of Moses to Hobab is the language of every true saint of your acquaintance to you. Numb. x. 29. "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." As Moses, when on his journey through the wilderness, following the pillar of cloud and fire, invited Hobab—with whom he had been acquainted in the land of Midian, where Moses had formerly dwelt with him—to go with him and his people to Canaan, to partake with them in the good that God had promised them; so do those of your friends and acquaintance invite you, out of a land of darkness and wickedness, where they have formerly been with you, to go with them to the heavenly Canaan. The company of saints, the true church of Christ invites you. The lovely bride calls you to the marriage-supper. She hath authority to invite

guests to her own wedding; and you ought to look on her invitation and desire, as the call of Christ the bridegroom; for it is the voice of his Spirit in her, Rev. xxii. 17. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Where seems to be a reference to what has been said, chap. xix. 7—9. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." It is with respect to this her marriage-supper that she, from the motion of the Spirit of the Lamb in her, says, Come. So that you are invited on all hands; all conspire to call you. God the Father invites you: This is the King who has made a marriage for his Son: and he sends forth his servants, the ministers of the gospel, to invite the guests. And the Son himself invites you: It is he that speaks, Rev. xvii. 17. "And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come." He tells us who he is in the foregoing verse, "I Jesus, the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." And God's ministers invite you, and all the church invites you; and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God that hour that you accept the invitation.

5. Consider what a doleful company will be left after this extraordinary time of mercy is over. We have reason to think that there will be a number left. We read that when Ezekiel's healing waters increased so abundantly, and the healing effect of them was so very general; yet there were certain places, where the waters came, that never were healed. Ezek. xlvii. 9—11. "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets: there fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea exceeding many. But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof, shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt." And even in the apostles' times, when there was such wonderful success of the gospel wherever they came, there were some that did not believe. Acts xiii. 48. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." And chap. xxviii. 24. "And some believed, and some believed not." So we have no reason to expect but there will be some left amongst us. It is to be hoped it will be but a small company: but what a doleful com-

pany will it be! How darkly and awfully will it look upon them! If you shall be of that company, how well may your friends and relations lament over you, and bemoan your dark and dangerous circumstances! If you would not be one of them, make haste, delay not, and look not behind you. Shall all sorts obtain, shall every one press into the kingdom of God, while you stay loitering behind in a doleful undone condition? Shall every one take heaven, while you remain with no other portion but this world? Now take up that resolution, that if it be possible you will cleave to them that have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them. Count the cost of a thorough, violent, and perpetual pursuit of salvation, and forsake all, as Ruth forsook her own country, and all her pleasant enjoyments in it. Do not do as Orpah did, who set out, and then was discouraged, and went back: but hold out with Ruth through all discouragement and opposition. When you consider others that have chosen the better part, let that resolution be ever firm with you: "Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

DISCOURSE IV.

THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS.

ROM. III. 19.

—That every mouth may be stopped.—

THE main subject of the doctrinal part of this epistle, is the free grace of God in the salvation of men by Jesus Christ; especially as it appears in the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And the more clearly to evince this doctrine, and shew the reason of it, the apostle, in the first place, establishes that point, that no flesh living can be justified by the deeds of the law. And to prove it, he is very large and particular in shewing that all mankind, not only the Gentiles but Jews, are under sin, and so under the condemnation of the law; which is what he insists upon from the beginning of the epistle to this place. He first begins with the Gentiles; and in the first chapter shews that they are under sin, by setting forth the exceeding corruptions and horrid wickedness that overspread the Gentile world: And then through the second chapter, and the former part of this third chapter, to the text and following verse, he shews the same of the Jews, that they also are in the same circumstances with the Gentiles in this regard. They had a high thought of themselves, because they were God's covenant people, and circumcised, and the children of Abraham. They despised the Gentiles as polluted, condemned, and accursed; but looked on themselves, on account of their external privileges, and ceremonial and moral righteousness, as a pure and holy people, and the children of God; as the apostle observes in the second chapter. It was therefore strange doctrine to them, that they also were unclean and guilty in God's sight, and under the condemnation and curse of the law. The apostle therefore, on account of their strong prejudices against such doc-

trine, the more particularly insists upon it, and shews that they are no better than the Gentiles; as in the 9th verse of this chapter, "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And, to convince them of it, he produces certain passages out of their own law, or the Old Testament, (to whose authority they pretended a great regard,) from the 9th verse to our text. And it may be observed, that the apostle *first* cites certain passages to prove that all mankind are *corrupt*, (ver. 10—12.) "As it is written, There is none righteous; no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good; no, not one." *Secondly*, The passages he cites next, are to prove, that not only are all corrupt, but each one *wholly* corrupt, as it were all over unclean, from the crown of the head to the soles of his feet; and therefore several particular parts of the body are mentioned, the throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, the feet, (ver. 13—15.) "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood." And, *thirdly*, he quotes other passages to shew, that each one is not only all over corrupt, but corrupt to a desperate degree, (ver. 16—18.) by affirming the most pernicious tendency of their wickedness: "Destruction and misery are in their ways." And then by denying all goodness or godliness in them; "And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." And then, lest the Jews should think these passages of their law do not concern them, and that only the Gentiles are intended in them, the apostle shews in the text, not only that they are not exempt, but that they especially must be understood: "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." By those that are *under* the law are meant the Jews; and the Gentiles by those that are *without* law; as appears by the 12th verse of the preceding chapter. There is special reason to understand the law, as speaking to and of them, to whom it was immediately given. And therefore the Jews would be unreasonable in exempting themselves. And if we examine the places of the Old Testament whence these passages are taken, we shall see plainly that special respect is had to the wickedness of the people of that nation, in every one of them. So that the law shuts all up in universal and desperate wickedness, *that every mouth may be stopped;* the mouths of the Jews, as well as of the Gentiles, notwithstanding all those privileges by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles.

The things that the law says, are sufficient to stop the mouths of all mankind, in two respects.

1. To stop them from boasting of their righteousness, as the Jews were wont to do; as the apostle observes in the 23d verse of the preceding chapter. That the apostle has respect to stopping their mouths in this respect, appears by the 27th verse of the context, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded." The law stops our mouths from making any plea for life, or the favour of God, or any positive good, from our own righteousness.

2. To stop them from making any excuse for ourselves, or objection against the execution of the sentence of the law, or the infliction of the punishment that it threatens. That this is intended, appears by the words immediately following, "That all the world may become guilty before God." That is, that they may appear to be guilty, and stand convicted before God, and justly liable to the condemnation of his law, as guilty of death, according to the Jewish way of speaking.

And thus the apostle proves, that no flesh can be justified in God's sight by the deeds of the law; as he draws the conclusion in the following verse; and so prepares the way for establishing the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, which he proceeds to do in the following part of the chapter, and of the epistle.

DOCTRINE.

"It is just with God eternally to cast off and destroy sinners." For this is the punishment which the law condemns to.—The truth of this doctrine may appear by the joint consideration of two things, *viz.* Man's *sinfulness*, and God's *sovereignty*.

I. It appears from the consideration of man's sinfulness. And that whether we consider the infinitely evil nature of all sin, or how much sin men are guilty of.

1. If we consider the infinite evil and heinousness of sin in general, it is not unjust in God to inflict what punishment is deserved; because the very notion of deserving any punishment is, that it may be justly inflicted. A deserved punishment and a just punishment are the same thing. To say that one *deserves* such a punishment, and yet to say that he does not *justly* deserve it, is a contradiction; and if he justly deserves it, then it may be justly *inflicted*.

Every crime or fault deserves a greater or less punishment, in proportion as the crime itself is greater or less. If any fault deserves punishment, then so much the greater the fault, so much the greater is the punishment deserved. The faulty nature of

any thing is the formal ground and reason of its desert of punishment; and therefore the more any thing hath of this nature, the more punishment it deserves. And therefore the terribleness of the degree of punishment, let it be never so terrible, is no argument against the justice of it, if the proportion does but hold between the heinousness of the crime and the dreadfulness of the punishment; so that if there be any such thing as a fault infinitely heinous, it will follow that it is just to inflict a punishment for it that is infinitely dreadful.

A crime is more or less heinous, according as we are under greater or less *obligations* to the contrary. This is self-evident; because it is herein that the criminalness or faultiness of any thing consists, that it is contrary to what we are obliged or bound to, or what *ought* to be in us. So the faultiness of one being hating another, is in proportion to his obligation to love him. The crime of one being despising and casting contempt on another, is proportionably more or less heinous, as he was under greater or less obligations to honour him. The fault of disobeying another, is greater or less, as any one is under greater or less obligations to obey him. And therefore, if there be any being that we are under infinite obligations to love, and honour, and obey, the contrary towards him must be infinitely faulty.

Our obligation to love, honour, and obey any being, is in proportion to his loveliness, honourableness, and authority; for that is the very meaning of the words. When we say any one is very lovely, it is the same as to say, that he is one very much to be loved. Or if we say such a one is more honourable than another, the meaning of the words is, that he is one that we are more obliged to honour. If we say any one has great authority over us, it is the same as to say, that he has great right to our subjection and obedience.

But God is a being *infinitely* lovely, because he hath infinite excellency and beauty. To have infinite excellency and beauty, is the same thing as to have infinite loveliness. He is a Being of infinite greatness, majesty, and glory; and therefore he is infinitely honourable. He is infinitely exalted above the greatest potentates of the earth, and highest angels in heaven; and therefore he is infinitely more honourable than they. His authority over us is infinite; and the ground of his right to our obedience is infinitely strong; for he is infinitely worthy to be obeyed himself, and we have an absolute, universal, and infinite dependence upon him.

So that sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and so deserving of infinite punishment.—Nothing is more agreeable to the common sense of mankind, than that sins committed against any one, must

be proportionably heinous to the dignity of the being offended and abused; as it is also agreeable to the word of God, 1 Sam. ii. 25. "If one man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him;" *(i. e.* shall judge him, and inflict a finite punishment, such as finite judges can inflict;) "but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" This was the aggravation of sin that made Joseph afraid of it, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How shall I commit this great wickedness, and sin against God?" This was the aggravation of David's sin, in comparison of which he esteemed all others as nothing, because they were infinitely exceeded by it. Psalm li. 4. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."—The *eternity* of the punishment of ungodly men renders it infinite; and it renders it no more than infinite; and therefore renders no more than proportionable to the heinousness of what they are guilty of.

If there be *any* evil or faultiness in sin against God, there is certainly *infinite* evil; for if it be any fault at all, it has an infinite aggravation, *viz.* that it is against an infinite object. If it be ever so small upon other accounts, yet if it be any thing, it has one infinite dimension; and so is an infinite evil. Which may be illustrated by this: if we suppose a thing to have infinite length, but no breadth and thickness, (a mere mathematical line) it is nothing: but if it have *any* breadth and thickness, though never so small, and infinite length, the quantity of it is infinite; it exceeds the quantity of any thing, however broad, thick, and long, wherein these dimensions are all finite.

So that the objections made against the *infinite* punishment of sin, from the necessity, or rather previous certainty of the futurition of sin, arising from the unavoidable original corruption of nature, if they argue any thing, argue against *any* faultiness at all: for if this necessity or certainty leaves *any* evil at all in sin, that fault must be *infinite* by reason of the infinite object.

But every such objector as would argue from hence, that there is no fault at all in sin, confutes himself, and shews his own insincerity in his objection. For at the same time that he objects, that men's acts are necessary, and that this kind of necessity is inconsistent with faultiness in the act, his own practice shews that he does not believe what he objects to be true: otherwise why does he at all *blame* men? Or why are such persons at all displeased with men, for abusive, injurious and ungrateful acts towards them? Whatever they pretend, by this they shew that indeed they do believe that there is no necessity in men's acts that is inconsistent with blame. And if their objection be this, that this previous certainty is by God's own ordering, and that where God orders an antecedent certainty of acts, he transfers all the fault from the actor on himself; their practice shews, that at the same time they do not

believe this, but fully believe the contrary: For when they are abused by men, they are displeased with *men*, and not with *God* only.

The light of nature teaches all mankind, that when an injury is *voluntary*, it is faulty, without any consideration of what there might be previously to determine the futurition of that evil act of the will. And it really teaches this as much to those that object and cavil most as to others; as their universal practice shews. By which it appears, that such objections are insincere and perverse. Men will mention others' corrupt nature when they are injured, as a thing that aggravates their crime, and that wherein their faultiness partly consists. How common is it for persons, when they look on themselves greatly injured by another, to inveigh against him, and aggravate his baseness, by saying, "He is a man of a most perverse spirit: he is naturally of a selfish, niggardly, or proud and haughty temper: he is one of a base and vile disposition." And yet men's natural and corrupt dispositions are mentioned as an excuse for them, with respect to their sins against God, as if they rendered them blameless.

2. That it is just with God eternally to cast off wicked men, may more abundantly appear, if we consider how much sin they are guilty of. From what has been already said, it appears, that if men were guilty of sin but in one particular, that is sufficient ground of their eternal rejection and condemnation. If they are *sinners*, that is enough. Merely this, might be sufficient to keep them from ever lifting up their heads, and cause them to smite on their breasts, with the publican that cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But sinful men are full of sin; principles and acts of sin; their guilt is like great mountains, heaped one upon another, till the pile is grown up to heaven. They are totally corrupt, in every part, in all their faculties; in all the principles of their nature, their understandings and wills; and in all their dispositions and affections. Their heads, their hearts, are totally depraved; all the members of their bodies are only instruments of sin; and all their senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, &c. are only inlets and outlets of sin, channels of corruption. There is nothing but sin, no good at all. Rom. vii. 18. "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." There is all manner of wickedness. There are the seeds of the greatest and blackest crimes. There are principles of all sorts of wickedness against men; and there is all wickedness against God. There is pride; there is enmity; there is contempt; there is quarrelling; there is Atheism; there is blasphemy. There are these things in exceeding strength; the heart is under the power of them, is sold under sin, and is a perfect slave to it. There is hard-heartedness, hardness greater than that of a rock, or an adamant-stone. There is ob-

stinacy and perverseness, incorrigibleness and inflexibleness in sin, that will not be overcome by threatenings or promises, by awakenings or encouragements, by judgments or mercies, neither by that which is terrifying, nor that which is winning. The very blood of God our Saviour will not win the heart of a wicked man.

And there are actual wickednesses without number or measure. There are breaches of every command, in thought, word, and deed; a life full of sin; days and nights filled up with sin; mercies abused, and frowns despised; mercy and justice, and all the divine perfections, trampled on; and the honour of each person in the Trinity trod in the dirt. Now if one sinful word or thought has so much evil in it, as to deserve eternal destruction, how do they deserve to be eternally cast off and destroyed, that are guilty of so much sin!

II. If with man's sinfulness, we consider God's *sovereignty*, it may serve further to clear God's justice in the eternal rejection and condemnation of sinners, from men's cavils and objections. I shall not now pretend to determine precisely what things are and what things are not proper acts and exercises of God's holy sovereignty; but only, that God's sovereignty extends to the following things:

1. That such is God's sovereign power and right, that he is originally under no *obligation* to keep men from sinning; but may in his providence permit and *leave* them to sin. He was not obliged to keep either angels or men from falling. It is *unreasonable* to suppose, that God should be obliged, if he makes a reasonable creature capable of knowing his will, and receiving a law from him, and being subject to his moral government, at the same time to make it *impossible* for him to sin, or break his law. For if God be obliged to this, it destroys all use of any commands, laws, promises or threatenings, and the very notion of any moral government of God over those reasonable creatures. For to what purpose would it be, for God to give such and such laws, and declare his holy will to a creature, and annex promises and threatenings to move him to his duty, and make him careful to perform it, if the creature at the same time has this to think of, that God is *obliged* to make it *impossible* for him to break his laws? How can God's threatenings move to care or watchfulness, when, at the same time, God is obliged to render it impossible that he should be exposed to the threatenings? Or, to what purpose is it for God to give a law at all? For according to this supposition, it is God, and not the creature, that is under law. It is the lawgiver's care, and not the subject's, to see that his law is obeyed; and this care is what the lawgiver is absolutely obliged to! If God be *obliged*

never to *permit* a creature to fall, there is an end of all divine laws, or government, or authority of God over the creature; there can be no manner of use of these things.

God *may permit* sin, though the being of sin will *certainly* ensue on that permission; and so, by permission, he may dispose and order the event. If there were any such thing as chance, or mere contingence, and the very notion of it did not carry a gross absurdity, (as might easily be shewn that it does,) it would have been very unfit that God should have left it to mere chance, whether man should fall or no. For chance, if there should be any such thing, is undesigning and blind. And certainly it is more fit that an event of so great importance, and which is attended with such an infinite train of great consequences, should be disposed and ordered by infinite *wisdom*, than that it should be left to blind *chance*.

If it be said, that God need not have interposed to render it impossible for man to sin, and yet not leave it to mere contingence or blind chance neither; but might have left it with man's *free-will*, to determine whether to sin or no: I answer, if God did leave it to man's free-will, without any *sort of disposal, or ordering* [or rather, *adequate cause*] in the case, whence it should be previously *certain* how that free-will should determine, then still that first determination of the will must be merely contingent or by chance. It could not have any antecedent act of the will to determine it; for I speak now of the very first act or motion of the will, respecting the affair that may be looked upon as the prime ground and highest source of the event. To suppose this to be determined by a foregoing act is a contradiction. God's disposing this determination of the will by his *permission*, does not at all infringe the liberty of the creature. It is in no respect any more inconsistent with liberty, than mere chance or contingence. For if the determination of the will be from blind, undesigning chance, it is no more from the agent himself, or from the will itself, than if we suppose, in the case, a wise divine disposal by permission.

2. It was fit that it should be at the ordering of the divine wisdom and good pleasure, whether every particular man should stand for himself, or whether the first father of mankind should be appointed as the moral and federal head and representative of the rest. If God has not liberty in this matter to determine either of these two as he pleases, it must be because determining that the first father of men should represent the rest, and not that every one should stand for himself, is *injurious* to mankind. For if it be not injurious, how is it unjust? But it is not injurious to mankind; for there is nothing in the nature of the case itself, that makes it better that each man should stand for himself, than that

all should be represented by their common father; as the least reflection or consideration will convince any one. And if there be nothing in the nature of the thing that makes the former better for mankind than the latter, then it will follow, that they are not hurt in God's choosing and appointing the latter, rather than the former; or, which is the same thing, that it is not injurious to mankind.

3. When men are fallen, and become sinful, God by his sovereignty has a right to determine about their redemption as he pleases. He has a right to determine whether he will redeem any, or not. He might, if he had pleased, have left all to perish, or might have redeemed all. Or, he may redeem some, and leave others; and if he doth so, he may take whom he pleases, and leave whom he pleases. To suppose that all have forfeited his favour, and deserved to perish, and to suppose that he may not leave any one individual of them to perish, implies a contradiction; because it supposes that such an one has a claim to God's favour, and is not justly liable to perish: which is contrary to the supposition.

It is meet that God should order all these things according to his own pleasure. By reason of his greatness and glory, by which he is infinitely above all, he is worthy to be sovereign, and that his pleasure should in all things take place. He is worthy that he should make himself his end, and that he should make nothing but his own wisdom his rule in pursuing that end, without asking leave or counsel of any, and without giving account of any of his matters. It is fit that he who is absolutely perfect, and infinitely wise, and the Fountain of all wisdom, should determine every thing [that he effects] by his own will, even things of the greatest importance. It is meet that he should be thus sovereign, because he is the first being, the eternal being, whence all other beings are. He is the creator of all things; and all are absolutely and universally dependent on him; and therefore it is meet that he should act as the sovereign possessor of heaven and earth.

APPLICATION.

In the improvement of this doctrine, I would chiefly direct myself to sinners who are afraid of damnation, in an use of conviction. This may be matter of conviction to you, that it would be just and righteous with God eternally to reject and destroy you. This is what you are in danger of. You who are a Christless sinner, are a poor condemned creature: God's wrath still abides upon you; and the sentence of condemnation lies upon you.—

You are in God's hands, and it is uncertain what he will do with you. You are afraid what will become of you. You are afraid that it will be your portion to suffer eternal burnings; and your fears are not without grounds; you have reason to tremble every moment. But be you never so much afraid of it, let eternal damnation be never so dreadful, yet it is just. God may nevertheless do it, and be righteous, and holy, and glorious. Though eternal damnation be what you cannot bear, and how much soever your heart shrinks at the thoughts of it, yet God's justice may be glorious in it. The dreadfulness of the thing on your part, and the greatness of your dread of it, do not render it the less righteous on God's part. If you think otherwise, it is a sign that you do not see yourself, that you are not sensible what sin is, nor how much of it you have been guilty of. Therefore for your conviction, be directed,

First, To look over your past life: inquire at the mouth of conscience, and hear what that has to testify concerning it. Consider what you are, what light you have had, and what means you have lived under: and yet how you have behaved yourself! What have those many days and nights you have lived been filled up with? How have those years that have rolled over your heads, one after another, been spent? What has the sun shone upon you for, from day to day, while you have improved his light to serve Satan by it? What has God kept your breath in your nostrils for, and given you meat and drink, that you have spent your life and strength, supported by them, in opposing God, and rebellion against him?

How *many sorts* of wickedness have you not been guilty of! How manifold have been the abominations of your life! What profaneness and contempt of God has been exercised by you! How little regard have you had to the scriptures, to the word preached, to sabbaths, and sacraments! How profanely have you talked, many of you, about those things that are holy! After what manner have many of you kept God's holy day, not regarding the holiness of the time, nor caring what you thought of in it! Yea, you have not only spent the time in worldly, vain, and unprofitable thoughts, but immoral thoughts; pleasing yourself with the reflection on past acts of wickedness, and in contriving new acts. Have not you spent much holy time in gratifying your lusts in your imaginations; yea, not only holy time, but the very time of God's public worship, when you have appeared in God's more immediate presence? How have you not only not attended to the worship, but have in the mean time been feasting your lusts, and wallowing yourself in abominable uncleanness! How many sabbaths have you spent, one after another, in a most wretched manner! Some of you, not only in worldly and

wicked thoughts, but also a very wicked outward behaviour! When you on sabbath-days have got along with your wicked companions, how has holy time been treated among you! What kind of conversation has there been! Yea, how have some of you, by a very indecent carriage, openly dishonoured and cast contempt on the sacred services of God's house, and holy day!— And what you have done some of you alone, what wicked practices there have been in secret, even in holy time, God and your own consciences know.

And how have you behaved yourself in the time of family prayer! And what a trade have many of you made of absenting yourselves from the worship of the families you belong to, for the sake of vain company! And how have you continued in the neglect of secret prayer! therein wilfully living in a known sin, going abreast against as plain a command as any in the Bible! Have you not been one that has cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God?

What wicked carriage have some of you been guilty of towards your parents! How far have you been from paying that honour to them which God has required! Have you not even harboured ill-will and malice towards them? And when they have displeased you, have wished evil to them? Yea, and shewn your vile spirit in your behaviour? and it is well if you have not mocked them behind their backs; and, like the accursed Ham and Canaan, as it were, derided your parents' nakedness instead of covering it, and hiding your eyes from it. Have not some of you often disobeyed your parents, yea, and refused to be subject to them? Is it not a wonder of mercy and forbearance, that the proverb has not before now been accomplished on you, Prov. xxx. 17. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it?"

What revenge and malice have you been guilty of towards your neighbours! How have you indulged this spirit of the devil, hating others, and wishing evil to them, rejoicing when evil befel them, and grieving at others' prosperity, and lived in such a way for a long time! Have not some of you allowed a passionate furious spirit, and behaved yourselves in your anger more like wild beasts than Christians?

What covetousness has been in many of you! Such has been your inordinate love of the world, and care about the things of it, that it has taken up your heart; you have allowed no room for God and religion; you have minded the world more than your eternal salvation. For the vanities of the world you have neglected reading, praying, and meditation; for the things of the world you have broken the sabbath; for the world you have spent

a great deal of your time in quarrelling. For the world you have envied and hated your neighbour; for the world you have cast God, and Christ, and heaven, behind your back; for the world you have sold your own soul. You have as it were drowned your soul in worldly cares and desires; you have been a mere earth-worm, that is never in its element but when grovelling and buried in the earth.

How much of a spirit of *pride* has appeared in you, which is in a peculiar manner the spirit and condemnation of the devil! How have some of you vaunted yourselves in your apparel! Others in their riches! Others in their knowledge and abilities! How has it galled you to see others above you! How much has it gone against the grain for you to give others their due honour! And how have you shewn your pride by setting up your wills in opposing others, and stirring up and promoting division, and a party-spirit in public affairs!

How *sensual* have you been! Are there not some here that have debased themselves below the dignity of human nature, by wallowing in sensual filthiness, as swine in the mire, or as filthy vermin feeding with delight on rotten carrion? What intemperance have some of you been guilty of! How much of your precious time have you spent away at the tavern, and in drinking companies, when you ought to have been at home, seeking God and your salvation in your families and closets!

And what abominable *lasciviousness* have some of you been guilty of! How have you indulged yourself from day to day, and from night to night, in all manner of unclean imaginations! Has not your soul been filled with them, till it has become a hold of foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird? What foul-mouthed persons have some of you been, often in lewd and lascivious talk and unclean songs, wherein were things not fit to be spoken! And such company, where such conversation has been carried on, has been your delight. And with what unclean acts and practices have you defiled yourself! God and your own consciences know what abominable lasciviousness you have practised in things not fit to be named, when you have been alone; when you ought to have been reading, or meditating, or on your knees before God in secret prayer. And how have you corrupted others, as well as polluted yourselves! What vile uncleanness have you practised in company! What abominations have you been guilty of in the dark! Such as the apostle doubtless had respect to in Eph. v. 12. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done of them in secret." Some of you have corrupted others, and done what in you lay to undo their souls, (if you have not actually done it;) and by your vile practices and example have made room for Satan, invited his pre-

sence, and established his interest, in the town where you have lived.

What *lying* have some of you been guilty of, especially in your childhood! And have not your heart and lips often disagreed since you came to riper years? What fraud, and deceit, and unfaithfulness, have many of you practised in your own dealings with your neighbours, of which your own heart is conscious, if you have not been noted by others!

And how have some of you behaved yourselves in your *family* relations! How have you neglected your children's souls! And not only so, but have corrupted their minds by your bad examples; and instead of training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have rather brought them up in the devil's service!

How have some of you attended that sacred ordinance of the Lord's supper without any manner of serious preparation, and in a careless slighty frame of spirits, and chiefly to comply with custom! Have you not ventured to put the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ into your mouth, while at the same time you lived in ways of known sins, and intended no other than still to go on in the same wicked practices? And, it may be, have sat at the Lord's table with rancour in your heart against some of your brethren that you have sat there with. You have come even to that holy feast of love among God's children, with the leaven of malice and envy in your heart; and so have eat and drank judgment to yourself.

What stupidity and sottishness has attended your course of wickedness; which has appeared in your obstinacy under awakening dispensations of God's word and providence. And how have some of you backslidden after you have set out in religion, and quenched God's Spirit after he had been striving with you! And what unsteadiness, and slothfulness, and long misimprovement of God's strivings with you, have you been chargeable with!

Now, can you think when you have thus behaved yourself, that God is *obliged* to shew you mercy? Are you not after all this ashamed to talk of its being hard with God to cast you off? Does it become one who has lived such a life, to open his mouth to excuse himself, to object against God's justice in his condemnation, or to complain of it as hard in God not to give him converting and pardoning grace, and make him his child, and bestow on him eternal life! Or to talk of his duties and great pains in religion, as if such performances were worthy to be accepted, and to draw God's heart to such a creature! If this has been your manner, does it not shew how little you have considered yourself, and how little a sense you have had of your own sinfulness?

Secondly, Be directed to consider, if God should eternally reject and destroy you, what an agreeableness and exact mutual answerableness there would be between God so dealing with you, and your spirit and behaviour. There would not only be an equality, but a similitude. God declares, that his dealings with men shall be suitable to their disposition and practice. Psalm xviii. 25, 26. "With the merciful man, thou wilt shew thyself merciful: With an upright man, thou wilt shew thyself upright: With the pure, thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward, thou wilt shew thyself froward." How much soever you dread damnation, and are affrighted and concerned at the thoughts of it, yet if God should indeed eternally damn you, you would be met with but in your own way; you would be dealt with exactly according to your own dealing. Surely it is but fair that you should be made to buy in the same measure in which you sell.

Here I would particularly shew,—1. That if God should eternally destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of *God*. 2. That it would be agreeable to your treatment of *Jesus Christ*. 3. That it would be agreeable to your behaviour towards your *neighbours*. 4. That it would be according to your own foolish behaviour towards *yourself*.

I. If God should for ever cast you off, it would be exactly agreeable to your treatment of *him*. That you may be sensible of this, consider,

1. You never have exercised the least degree of love to God; and therefore it would be agreeable to your treatment of him, if he should never express any love to you. When God converts and saves a sinner, it is a wonderful and unspeakable manifestation of divine love. When a poor lost soul is brought home to Christ, and has all his sins forgiven him, and is made a child of God, it will take up a whole eternity to express and declare the greatness of that love. And why should God be *obliged* to express such wonderful love to you, who never exercised the least degree of love to him in all your life? You never have loved God, who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under *obligation* to love you, who are all over deformed and loathsome as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper? You have no benevolence in your heart towards God; you never rejoiced in God's happiness; if he had been miserable, and that had been possible, you would have liked it as well as if he were happy; you would not have cared how miserable he was, nor mourned for it, any more than you now do for the devil's being miserable. And why then should God be looked upon as obliged to take so much care for your happiness, as to do such great things for it, as he doth for those that are saved? Or why should God be called

hard, in case he should not be careful to save you from misery? You care not what becomes of God's glory; you are not distressed how much soever his honour seems to suffer in the world: And why should God care any more for your welfare? Has it not been so, that if you could but promote your private interest, and gratify your own lusts, you cared not how much the glory of God suffered? And why may not God advance his own glory in the ruin of your welfare, not caring how much your interest suffers by it? You never so much as stirred one step, sincerely making the glory of God your end, or acting from real respect to him: And why then is it hard if God doth not do such great things for you, as the changing of your nature, raising you from spiritual death to life, conquering the powers of darkness for you, translating you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, delivering you from eternal misery, and bestowing upon you eternal glory? You were not willing to deny yourself for God; you never cared to put yourself out of your way for Christ: Whenever any thing cross or difficult came in your way, that the glory of God was concerned in, it has been your manner to shun it, and excuse yourself from it. You did not care to hurt yourself for Christ, whom you did not see worthy of it: And why then must it be looked upon as a hard and cruel thing, if Christ has not been pleased to spill his blood and be tormented to death for such a sinner?

2. You have slighted God; and why then may not God justly slight you? When sinners are sensible in some measure of their misery, they are ready to think it hard that God will take no notice of them; that he will see them in such a lamentable distressed condition, beholding their burdens and tears, and seem to slight it, and manifest no pity to them. Their souls they think are precious: it would be a dreadful thing if they should perish, and burn in hell for ever. They do not see through it, that God should make so light of their salvation. But then, ought they not to consider, that as their souls are precious, so is God's honour precious? The honour of the infinite God, the great King of heaven and earth, is a thing of as great importance, (and surely may justly be so esteemed by God,) as the happiness of you, a poor little worm. But yet you have slighted that honour of God, and valued it no more than the dirt under your feet. You have been told that such and such things were contrary to the will of a holy God, and against his honour; but you cared not for that. God called upon you, and exhorted you to be more tender of his honour; but you went on without regarding him. Thus have you slighted God! And yet, is it hard that God should slight you? Are you more honourable than God, that he must be obliged to make much of you, how light soever you make of him and his glory?

And you have not only slighted God in time past, but you slight him still. You indeed now make a pretence and show of honouring him in your prayers, and attendance on other external duties, and by sober countenance, and seeming devoutness in your words and behaviour; but it is all mere dissembling. That downcast look and seeming reverence, is not from any honour you have to God in your heart, though you would have God take it so. You who have not believed in Christ, have not the least jot of honour to God; that shew of it is merely forced, and what you are driven to by fear, like those mentioned in Psalm lxvi. 3. "Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves to thee." In the original it is, "shall lie unto thee;" that is, yield feigned submission, and dissemble respect and honour to thee. There is a rod held over you that makes you seem to pay such respect to God. This religion and devotion, even the very appearance of it, would soon be gone, and all vanish away, if that were removed. Sometimes it may be you weep in your prayers, and in your hearing sermons, and hope God will take notice of it, and take it for some honour; but he sees it to be all hypocrisy. You weep for yourself; you are afraid of hell; and do you think that that is worthy of God to take much notice of you, because you can cry when you are in danger of being damned; when at the same time you indeed care nothing for God's honour?

Seeing you thus disregard so great a God, is it a heinous thing for God to slight you, a little, wretched, despicable creature; a worm, a mere nothing, and less than nothing; a vile insect, that has risen up in contempt against the Majesty of heaven and earth?

3. Why should God be looked upon as obliged to bestow salvation upon you, when you have been so ungrateful for the mercies he has bestowed upon you already? God has tried you with a great deal of kindness, and he never has sincerely been thanked by you for any of it. God has watched over you, and preserved you, and provided for you, and followed you with mercy all your days; and yet you have continued sinning against him. He has given you food and raiment, but you have improved both in the service of sin. He has preserved you while you slept; but when you arose, it was to return to the old trade of sinning. God, notwithstanding this ingratitude, has still continued his mercy; but his kindness has never won your heart, or brought you to a more grateful behaviour towards him. It may be you have received many remarkable mercies, recoveries from sickness, or preservations of your life when exposed by accidents, when if you had died, you would have gone directly to hell: but you never had any true thankfulness for any of these mercies. God has kept

you out of hell, and continued your day of grace, and the offers of salvation, so long a time; while you did not regard your own salvation so much as in secret to ask God for it. And now God has greatly added to his mercy to you, by giving you the strivings of his Spirit, whereby a most precious opportunity for your salvation is in your hands. But what thanks has God received for it? What kind of returns have you made for all this kindness? As God has multiplied mercies, so have you multiplied provocations.

And yet now are you ready to quarrel for mercy, and to find fault with God, not only that he does not bestow more mercy, but to contend with him, because he does not bestow infinite mercy upon you, heaven with all it contains, and even himself, for your eternal portion. What ideas have you of yourself, that you think God is *obliged* to do so much for you, though you treat him ever so ungratefully for his kindness wherewith you have been followed all the days of your life?

4. You have voluntarily chosen to be with Satan in his enmity and opposition to God; how justly therefore might you be with him in his punishment? You did not choose to be on God's side, but rather chose to side with the devil, and have obstinately continued in it, against God's often repeated calls and counsels. You have chosen rather to hearken to Satan than to God, and would be with him in his work. You have given yourself up to him, to be subject to his power and government, in opposition to God. How justly therefore may God also give you up to him, and leave you in his power, to accomplish your ruin? Seeing you have yielded yourself to his will, to do as he would have you, surely God may leave you in his hands to execute his will upon you. If men will be with God's enemy, and on his side, why is God obliged to redeem them out of his hands, when they have done his work? Doubtless you would be glad to serve the devil, and be God's enemy while you live, and then to have God your friend, and deliver you from the devil, when you come to die. But will God be unjust if he deals otherwise by you? No, surely! It will be altogether and perfectly just, that you should have your portion with him with whom you have chosen to work; and that you should be in his possession to whose dominion you have yielded yourself; and if you cry to God for deliverance, he may most justly give you that answer, (Judges x. 14.) "Go to the gods which you have chosen."

5. Consider how often you have refused to hear God's calls to you, and how just it would therefore be, if he should refuse to hear you when you call upon him. You are ready, it may be, to complain that you have often prayed, and earnestly begged of God to shew you mercy, and yet have no answer of prayer: One says,

I have been constant in prayer for so many years, and God has not heard me. Another says, I have done what I can; I have prayed as earnestly as I am able; I do not see how I can do more; and it will seem hard if after all I am denied. But do you consider how often God has called, and you have denied him? God has called earnestly, and for a long time; he has called and called again in his word, and in his providence, and you have refused. You was not uneasy for fear you should not shew regard enough to his calls. You let him call as loud, and as long as he would; for your part, you had no leisure to attend to what he said; you had other business to mind: you had these and those lusts so gratify and please, and worldly concerns to attend; you could not afford to stand considering of what God had to say to you. When the ministers of Christ have stood and pleaded with you, in his name, sabbath after sabbath, and have even spent their strength in it, how little was you moved! It did not alter you, but you went on still as you used to do; when you went away, you returned again to your sins, to your lasciviousness, to your vain mirth, to your covetousness, to your intemperance, and that has been the language of your heart and practice, Exod. v. 2. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Was it no crime for you to refuse to hear when God called? And yet is it now very hard that God does not hear your earnest calls, and that though your calling on God be not from any respect to him, but merely from self-love? The devil would beg as earnestly as you, if he had any hope to get salvation by it, and a thousand times as earnestly, and yet be as much of a devil as he is now. Are your calls more worthy to be heard than God's? Or is God, more obliged to regard what you say to him, than you to regard his commands, counsels, and invitations to you? What can be more justice than this, Prov. i. 24, &c. "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

6. Have you not taken encouragement to sin against God, on that very presumption, that God would shew you mercy when you sought it? And may not God justly refuse you that mercy that you have so presumed upon? You have flattered yourself, that though you did so, yet God would shew you mercy when you cried earnestly to him for it: How righteous therefore would it be in God, to disappoint such a wicked presumption! It was upon

that very hope that you dared to affront the majesty of heaven so dreadfully as you have done; and can you now be so sottish as to think that God is obliged not to frustrate that hope?

When a sinner takes encouragement to neglect secret prayer which God has commanded, to gratify his lusts, to live a carnal vain life, to thwart God, to run upon him, and contemn him to his face, thinking with himself, "If I do so, God would not damn me; he is a merciful God, and therefore when I seek his mercy he will bestow it upon me;" must God be accounted hard because he will not do according to such a sinner's presumption?

Cannot he be excused from shewing such a sinner mercy when he is pleased to seek it, without incurring the charge of being unjust? If this be the case, God has no liberty to vindicate his own honour and majesty; but must lay himself open to all manner of affronts, and yield himself up to the abuses of vile men, though they disobey, despise, and dishonour him, as much as they will; and when they have done, his mercy and pardoning grace must not be in his own power and at his own disposal, but he must be obliged to dispense it at their call. He must take these bold and vile contemners of his majesty, when it suits them to ask it, and must forgive all their sins, and not only so, but must adopt them into his family, and make them his children, and bestow eternal glory upon them. What mean, low, and strange thoughts have such men of God, who think thus of him! Consider, that you have injured God the more, and have been the worse enemy to him, for his being a merciful God. So have you treated that attribute of God's mercy! How just is it therefore that you never should have any benefit of that attribute!

There is something peculiarly heinous in sinning against the mercy of God more than other attributes. There is such base and horrid ingratitude, in being the worse to God, because he is a being of infinite goodness and grace, that it above all things renders wickedness vile and detestable. This ought to win us, and engage us to serve God better; but instead of that, to sin against him the more has something inexpressibly bad in it, and does in a peculiar manner enhance guilt, and incense wrath; as seems to be intimated, Rom. ii. 4, 5. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

The greater the mercy of God is, the more should you be engaged to love him, and live to his glory. But it has been contrariwise with you; the consideration of the mercies of God being so exceeding great, is the thing wherewith you have encour-

aged yourself in sin. You have heard that the mercy of God was without bounds, that it was sufficient to pardon the greatest sinner, and you have upon that very account ventured to be a very great sinner. Though it was very offensive to God, though you heard that God infinitely hated sin, and that such practices as you went on in were exceeding contrary to his nature, will, and glory, yet that did not make you uneasy; you heard that he was a very merciful God, and had grace enough to pardon you, and so cared not how offensive your sins were to him. How long have some of you gone on in sin, and what great sins have some of you been guilty of, on that presumption! Your own conscience can give testimony to it, that this has made you refuse God's calls, and has made you regardless of his repeated commands. Now, how righteous would it be if God should swear in his wrath, that you should never be the better for his being infinitely merciful!

Your ingratitude has been the greater, that you have not only abused the attribute of God's mercy, taking encouragement from it to continue in sin, but you have also presumed that God would exercise infinite mercy to you in particular; which consideration should have especially endeared God to you. You have taken encouragement to sin the more, from that consideration, that Christ came into the world and died to save sinners; such thanks has Christ had from you, for enduring such a tormenting death for his enemies! Now, how justly might God refuse that you should ever be the better for his Son's laying down his life! It was because of these things that you put off seeking salvation. You would take the pleasures of sin still longer, hardening yourself because mercy was infinite, and it would not be too late, if you sought it afterwards; now, how justly may God disappoint you in this, and so order it that it shall be too late!

7. How have some of you risen up against God, and in the frame of your minds opposed him in his sovereign dispensations! And how justly upon that account might God oppose you, and set himself against you. You never yet would submit to God; never willingly comply, that God should have dominion over the world, and that he should govern it for his own glory, according to his own wisdom. You, a poor worm, a potsherd, a broken piece of an earthen vessel, have dared to find fault and quarrel with God. Isaiah xlv. 9. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth: Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou?" But yet you have ventured to do it. Rom. ix. 20. "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" But yet you have thought you was big enough; you have taken upon you to call God to an account, why he does thus and thus; you have said to Jehovah, What dost thou?

If you have been restrained by fear from openly venting your opposition and enmity of heart against God's government, yet it has been in you; you have not been quiet in the frame of your mind; you have had the heart of a viper within, and have been ready to spit your venom at God. It is well if sometimes you have not actually done it, by tolerating blasphemous thoughts and malignant risings of heart against him; yea, and the frame of your heart in some measure appeared in impatient and fretful behaviour.—Now, seeing you have thus opposed God, how just is it that God should oppose you? Or is it because you are so much better, and so much greater than God, that it is a crime for him to make that opposition against you which you make against him? Do you think that the liberty of making opposition is your exclusive prerogative, so that you may be an enemy to God, but God must by no means be an enemy to you, but must be looked upon under obligation nevertheless to help you, and save you by his blood, and bestow his best blessings upon you?

Consider how in the frame of your mind you have thwarted God in those very exercises of mercy towards others that you are seeking for yourself. God exercising his infinite grace towards your neighbours, has put you into an ill frame, and it may be, set you into a tumult of mind. How justly therefore may God refuse ever to exercise that mercy towards you! Have you not thus opposed God shewing mercy to others, even at the very time when you pretended to be earnest with God for pity and help for yourself? Yea, and while you was endeavouring to get something wherewith to recommend yourself to God? And will you look to God still with a challenge of mercy, and contend with him for it notwithstanding? Can you have such a heart, and have thus behaved yourself, come to God for any other than mere *sovereign mercy?*

II. If you should for ever be cast off by God, it would be agreeable to your treatment of *Jesus Christ.* It would have been just with God if he had cast you off for ever, without ever making you the offer of a Saviour. But God hath not done that; he has provided a Saviour for sinners, and offered him to you, even his own Son Jesus Christ, who is the only Saviour of men. All that are not for ever cast off are saved by him. God offers men salvation through him, and has promised us, that if we come to him, we shall not be cast off. But if you have treated, and still treat this Saviour after such a manner, that if you should be eternally cast off by God, it would be most agreeable to your behaviour towards him; which appears by this, *viz.* "That you reject Christ, and will not have him for your Saviour."

If God offers you a Saviour from deserved punishment, and you will not receive him, then surely it is just that you should go without a Saviour. Or is God obliged, because you do not like *this* Saviour, to provide you another? He has given an infinitely honourable and glorious person, even his only begotten Son, to be a sacrifice for sin, and so provided salvation; and this Saviour is offered to you: now if you refuse to accept him, is God therefore unjust if he does not save you? Is he obliged to save you in a way of *your* own choosing, because you do not like the way of *his* choosing? Or will you charge Christ with injustice because he does not become your Saviour, when at the same time you will not have him when he offers himself to you, and beseeches you to accept of him as your Saviour?

I am sensible that by this time many persons are ready to object against this. If all should speak what they now think, we should hear a murmuring all over the meeting-house, and one and another would say, "I cannot see how this can be, that I am not willing that Christ should be my Saviour, when I would give all the world that he was my Saviour: How is it possible that I should not be willing to have Christ for my Saviour, when this is what I am seeking after, and praying for, and striving for, as for my life?"

Here therefore I would endeavour to convince you, that you are under a gross mistake in this matter. And, 1*st*, I would endeavour to shew the grounds of your mistake. And 2*dly*, To demonstrate to you, that you have rejected, and do wilfully reject Jesus Christ.

1*st*. That you may see the weak grounds of your mistake, consider,

1. There is a great deal of difference between a willingness not to be damned, and a being willing to receive Christ for your Saviour. You have the former; there is no doubt of that: Nobody supposes that you *love misery* so as to choose an eternity of it; and so doubtless you are willing to be saved from eternal misery. But that is a very different thing from being willing to come to Christ: Persons very commonly mistake the one for the other, but they are quite two things. You may love the deliverance, but hate the deliverer. You tell of a willingness; but consider what is the object of that willingness. It does not respect Christ; the way of salvation by him is not at all the object of it; but it is wholly terminated on your escape from misery. The inclination of your will goes no further than self, it never reaches Christ. You are willing not to be miserable; that is, you love yourself; and there your will and choice terminate. And it is but a vain

pretence and delusion to say or think, that you are willing to accept of Christ.

2. There is certainly a great deal of difference between a forced compliance and a free willingness. Force and freedom cannot consist together. Now that willingness, whereby you think you are willing to have Christ for a Saviour, is merely a forced thing. Your heart does not go out after Christ of itself, but you are forced and driven to seek an interest in him. Christ has no share at all in your heart; there is no manner of closing of the heart with him. This forced compliance is not what Christ seeks of you; he seeks a free and willing acceptance, Psalm cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." He seeks not that you should receive him *against* your will, but with a free will. He seeks entertainment in your heart and choice.—And if you refuse thus to receive Christ, how just is it that Christ should refuse to receive you? How reasonable are Christ's terms, who offers to save all those that willingly, or with a good will, accept of him for their Saviour! Who can rationally expect that Christ should force himself upon any man to be his Saviour? Or what can be looked for more reasonable, than that all who would be saved by Christ, should heartily and freely entertain him? And surely it would be very dishonourable for Christ to offer himself upon lower terms.—But I would now proceed,

2*dly*. To shew that you are not willing to have Christ for a Saviour. To convince you of it, consider,

1. How it is possible that you should be willing to accept of Christ as a Saviour from the desert of a punishment that you are not sensible you have deserved. If you are truly willing to accept Christ as a Saviour, it must be as a sacrifice to make atonement for your guilt. Christ came into the world on this errand, to offer himself as an atonement, to answer for our desert of punishment. But how can you be willing to have Christ for a Saviour from a desert of hell, if you be not sensible that you have a desert of hell? If you have not really deserved everlasting burnings in hell, then the very offer of an atonement for such a desert is an imposition upon you. If you have no such guilt upon you, then the very offer of a satisfaction for that guilt is an injury, because it implies in it a charge of guilt that you are free from. Now therefore it is impossible that a man who is not convinced of his guilt can be willing to accept of such an offer; because he cannot be willing to accept the charge which the offer implies. A man who is not convinced that he has deserved so dreadful a punishment, cannot willingly submit to be charged with it. If he thinks he is willing, it is but a mere forced, feigned business; because in his heart he looks upon himself greatly injured; and

therefore he cannot freely accept of Christ, under that notion of a Saviour from the desert of such a punishment; for such an acceptance is an implicit owning that he does deserve such a punishment.

I do not say, but that men may be willing to be saved from an undeserved punishment; they may rather not suffer it, than suffer it. But a man cannot be willing to accept one at God's hands, under the notion of a Saviour from a punishment deserved from him which he thinks he has not deserved; it is impossible that any one should freely allow a Saviour under that notion. Such an one cannot like the way of salvation by Christ; for if he thinks he has not deserved hell, then he will think that freedom from hell is a debt; and therefore cannot willingly and heartily receive it as a free gift.—If a king should condemn a man to some tormenting death, which the condemned person thought himself not deserving of, but looked upon the sentence as unjust and cruel, and the king, when the time of execution drew nigh, should offer him his pardon, under the notion of a very great act of grace and clemency, the condemned person never could willingly and heartily allow it under that notion, because he judged himself unjustly condemned.

Now by this it is evident that you are not willing to accept of Christ as your Saviour; because you never yet had such a sense of your own sinfulness, and such a conviction of your great guilt in God's sight, as to be indeed convinced that you lay justly condemned to the punishment of hell. You never was convinced that you had forfeited all favour, and was in God's hands, and at his sovereign and arbitrary disposal, to be either destroyed or saved, just as he pleased. You never yet was convinced of the sovereignty of God. Hence are there so many objections arising against the justice of your punishment from original sin, and from God's decrees, from mercy shewn to others, and the like.

2. That you are not sincerely willing to accept of Christ as your Saviour, appears by this, That you never have been convinced that he is sufficient for the work of your salvation. You never had a sight or sense of any such excellency or worthiness in Christ, as should give such great value to his blood and his mediation with God, as that it was sufficient to be accepted for such exceeding guilty creatures, who have so provoked God, and exposed themselves to such amazing wrath. Saying it is so, and allowing it be as others say, is a very different thing from being really convinced of it, and a being made sensible of it in your own heart. The sufficiency of Christ depends upon, or rather consists in his excellency. It is because he is so excellent a person that his blood is of sufficient value to atone for sin, and it is hence that his obedience is so worthy in God's sight; it is also

hence that his intercession is so prevalent; and therefore those that never had any spiritual sight or sense of Christ's excellency, cannot be sensible of his sufficiency.

And that sinners are not convinced that Christ is sufficient for the work he has undertaken, appears most manifestly when they are under great convictions of their sin, and danger of God's wrath. Though it may be before they thought they could allow Christ to be sufficient, (for it is easy to allow any one to be sufficient for our defence at a time when we see no danger,) yet when they come to be sensible of their guilt and God's wrath, what discouraging thoughts do they entertain! How are they ready to draw towards despair, as if there were no hope or help for such wicked creatures as they! The reason is, They have no apprehension or sense of any other way that God's majesty can be vindicated, but only in their misery. To tell them of the blood of Christ signifies nothing, it does not relieve their sinking, despairing hearts. This makes it most evident that they are not convinced that Christ is sufficient to be their Mediator.—And as long as they are unconvinced of this, it is impossible they should be willing to accept of him as their Mediator and Saviour. A man in distressing fear will not willingly betake himself to a fort that he judges not sufficient to defend him from the enemy. A man will not willingly venture out into the ocean in a ship that he suspects is leaky, and will sink before he gets through his voyage.

3. It is evident that you are not willing to have Christ for your Saviour, because you have so mean an opinion of him, that you durst not trust his faithfulness. One that undertakes to be the Saviour of souls had need be faithful; for if he fails in such a trust, how great is the loss! But you are not convinced of Christ's faithfulness; as is evident, because at such times as when you are in a considerable measure sensible of your guilt and God's anger, you cannot be convinced that Christ is willing to accept of you, or that he stands ready to receive you, if you should come to him, though Christ so much invites you to come to him, and has so fully declared that he will not reject you, if you do come; as particularly, John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Now, there is no man can be heartily willing to trust his eternal welfare in the hands of an unfaithful person, or one whose faithfulness he suspects.

4. You are not willing to be saved in that way by Christ, as is evident, because you are not willing that your own goodness should be set at nought. In the way of salvation by Christ, men's own goodness is wholly set at nought; there is no account at all made of it. Now you cannot be willing to be saved in a way wherein your own goodness is set at nought, as is evident, since you make much of it yourself. You make much of your

prayers and pains in religion, and are often thinking of them; how considerable do they appear to you, when you look back upon them! And some of you are thinking how much more you have done than others, and expecting some respect or regard that God should manifest to what you do! Now, if you make so much of what you do yourself, it is impossible that you should be freely willing that God should make nothing of it. As we may see in other things; if a man is proud of a great estate, or if he values himself much upon his honourable office, or his great abilities, it is impossible that he should like it, and heartily approve of it, that others should make light of these things and despise them.

Seeing therefore it is so evident, that you refuse to accept of Christ as your Saviour, why is Christ to be blamed that he does not save you? Christ has offered himself to you, to be your Saviour in time past, and he continues offering himself still, and you continue to reject him, and yet complain that he does not save you.—So strangely unreasonable, and inconsistent with themselves, are gospel sinners!

But I expect there are many of you that still object. Such an objection as this, is probably now in the hearts of many here present.

Object. If I am not willing to have Christ for my Saviour, I cannot make myself willing.—But I would give an answer to this objection by laying down two things, that must be acknowledged to be exceeding evident.

1. It is no excuse, that you cannot receive Christ of yourself, unless you *would* if you could. This is so evident of itself, that it scarce needs any proof. Certainly if persons would not if they could, it is just the same thing as to the blame that lies upon them, whether they can or cannot. If you were willing, and then found that you could not, your being unable would alter the case, and might be some excuse; because then the defect would not be in your will, but only in your ability. But as long as you *will* not, it is no matter, whether you have ability or no ability.

If you are not willing to accept of Christ, it follows that you have no sincere willingness to be willing; because the will always necessarily approves of, and rests in its own acts. To suppose the contrary, would be to suppose a contradiction: it would be to suppose that a man's will is contrary to itself, or that he wills contrary to what he himself wills. As you are not willing to come to Christ, and cannot make yourself willing, so you have no sincere desire to be willing; and therefore may most justly perish without a Saviour. There is no excuse at all for you; for say what you will about your inability, the seat of your blame lies in your perverse *will*, that is an *enemy* to the Saviour. It is in

vain for you to tell of your want of power, as long as your will is found defective. If a man should hate you, and smite you in the face, but should tell you at the same time, that he hated you so much, that he could not help choosing and willing so to do, would you take it the more patiently for that? Would not your indignation be rather stirred up the more?

2. If you would be willing if you could, that is no excuse, unless your unwillingness to be willing be *sincere*. That which is hypocritical, and does not come from the heart, but is merely forced, ought wholly to be set aside, as worthy of no consideration; because common sense teaches, that what is not hearty but hypocritical is indeed nothing, being only a shew of what is not; but that which is good for nothing, ought to go for nothing. But if you set aside all that is not free, and call nothing a willingness, but a free hearty willingness, then see how the case stands, and whether or no you have not lost all your excuse for standing out against the calls of the gospel. You say you would make yourself willing to accept if you *could*; but it is not from any good principle that you are willing for that. It is not from any free inclination, or true respect to Christ, or any love to your duty, or any spirit of obedience. It is not from the influence of any real respect, or tendency in your heart, towards any thing good, or from any other principle than such as is in the hearts of devils, and would make them have the same sort of willingness in the same circumstances. It is therefore evident, that there can be no goodness in that *would* be willing to come to Christ: And that which has no goodness, cannot be an excuse for any badness. If there be no good in it, then it signifies nothing, and weighs nothing, when put into the scales to counterbalance that which is bad.

Sinners therefore spend their time in foolish arguing and objecting, making much of that which is good for nothing, making those excuses that are not worth offering. It is in vain to keep making objections. You stand justly condemned. The blame lies at your door: Thrust it off from you as often as you will, it will return upon you. Sew fig-leaves as long as you will, your nakedness will appear. You continue wilfully and wickedly rejecting Jesus Christ, and will not have him for your Saviour, and therefore it is sottish madness in you to charge Christ with injustice that he does not save you.

Here is the sin of unbelief! Thus the guilt of that great sin lies upon you! If you never had thus treated a Saviour, you might most justly have been damned to all eternity: it would but be exactly agreeable to your treatment of God. But besides this, when God, notwithstanding, has offered you his own dear Son, to save you from this endless misery you had deserved, and not only so, but to make you happy eternally in the enjoyment of

himself, you have refused him, and would not have him for your Saviour, and still refuse to comply with the offers of the gospel; what can render any man more inexcusable? If you should now perish for ever, what can you have to say!

Hereby the justice of God in your destruction appears in two respects:

1. It is more abundantly manifest that it is *just* that you should be destroyed. Justice never appears so conspicuous as it does after refused and abused mercy. Justice in damnation appears abundantly the more clear and bright, after a wilful rejection of offered salvation. What can an offended prince do more than freely offer pardon to a condemned malefactor? And if he refuses to accept of it, will any one say that his execution is unjust!

2. God's justice will appear in your *greater* destruction. Besides the guilt that you would have had if a Saviour never had been offered, you bring that great additional guilt upon you, of most ungratefully refusing offered deliverance What more base and vile treatment of God can there be, than for you, when justly condemned to eternal misery, and ready to be executed, and God graciously sends his own Son, who comes and knocks at your door with a pardon in his hand, and not only a pardon, but a deed of eternal glory; I say, what can be worse, than for you, out of dislike and enmity against God and his Son, to refuse to accept those benefits at his hands! How justly may the anger of God be greatly incensed and increased by it! When a sinner thus ungratefully rejects mercy, his last error is worse than the first; this is more heinous than all his former rebellion, and may justly bring down more fearful wrath upon him.

The heinousness of this sin of rejecting a Saviour especially appears in two things:

1. The greatness of the benefits offered; which appears in the greatness of the deliverance, which is from inexpressible degrees of corruption and wickedness of heart and life, the least degree of which is infinitely evil; and from misery that is everlasting; and in the greatness and glory of the inheritance purchased and offered, Heb. ii. 3. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

2. The wonderfulness of the way in which these benefits are procured and offered. That God should lay help on his own Son, when our case was so deplorable that help could be had in no mere creature; and that he should undertake for us, and should come into the world, and take upon him our nature, and should not only appear in a low state of life, but should die such a death, and endure such torments and contempt for sinners while enemies, how wonderful is it! And what tongue or pen can

set forth the greatness of the ingratitude, baseness, and perverseness there is in it, when a perishing sinner that is in the most extreme necessity of salvation, rejects it, after it is procured in such a way as this! That so glorious a person should be thus treated, and that when he comes on so gracious an errand! That he should stand so long offering himself and calling and inviting, as he has done to many of you, and all to no purpose, but all the while be set at nought! Surely you might justly be cast into hell without one more offer of a Saviour! Yea, and thrust down into the lowest hell! Herein you have exceeded the very devils; for they never rejected the offers of such glorious mercy; no, nor of any mercy at all. This will be the distinguishing condemnation of gospel-sinners, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."—That outward smoothness of your carriage towards Christ, that appearance of respect to him in your looks, your speeches, and gestures, do not argue but that you set him at nought in your heart. There may be much of these outward shews of respect, and yet you be like Judas, that betrayed the Son of man with a kiss; and like those mockers that bowed the knee before him, and at the same time spit in his face.

III. If God should for ever cast you off and destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of *others*.—It would be no other than what would be exactly answerable to your behaviour towards your fellow-creatures, that have the same human nature, and are naturally in the same circumstances with you, and that you ought to love as yourself. And that especially appears in two things:

1. You have many of you been opposite in your spirit to the salvation of others. There are several ways that natural men manifest a spirit of opposition against the salvation of souls. It sometimes appears by a fear that their companions, acquaintance, and equals, will obtain mercy, and so become unspeakably happier than they. It is sometimes manifested by an uneasiness at the news of what others have hopefully obtained. It appears when persons envy others for it, and dislike them the more, and disrelish their talk, and avoid their company, and cannot bear to hear their religious discourse, and especially to receive warnings and counsels from them. And it oftentimes appears by their backwardness to entertain charitable thoughts of them, and by their being brought with difficulty to believe that they have obtained mercy, and a forwardness to listen to any thing that seems to contradict it. The devil hated to own Job's sincerity, Job i. 7, &c. and chap. ii. verses 3—5. There appears very often

much of this spirit of the devil in natural men. Sometimes they are ready to make a ridicule of others' pretended godliness; they speak of the ground of others' hopes, as the enemies of the Jews did of the wall that they built. Neh. iv. 3. "Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." There are many that join with Sanballat and Tobiah, and are of the same spirit with them. There always was, and always will be, an enmity betwixt the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. It appeared in Cain, who hated his brother, because he was more acceptable to God than himself; and it appears still in these times, and in this place. There are many that are like the elder brother, who could not bear that the prodigal when he returned should be received with such joy and good entertainment, and was put into a fret by it, both against his brother that had returned, and his father that had made him so welcome. Luke xv.

Thus have many of you been opposite to the salvation of others, who stand in as great necessity of it as you. You have been against their being delivered from everlasting misery, who can bear it no better than you; not because their salvation would do you any hurt, or their damnation help you, any otherwise than as it would gratify that vile spirit that is so much like the spirit of the devil, who, because he is miserable himself, is unwilling that others should be happy. How just therefore is it that God should be opposite to your salvation! If you have so little love or mercy in you as to begrudge your neighbour's salvation, whom you have no cause to hate, but the law of God and nature requires you to love, why is God bound to exercise such infinite love and mercy to you, as to save you at the price of his own blood? You whom he is no way bound to love, but who have deserved his hatred a thousand and a thousand times? You are not willing that others should be converted, who have behaved themselves injuriously towards you; and yet, will you count it hard if God does not bestow converting grace upon you that have deserved ten thousand times as ill of God, as ever any of your neighbours have of you? You are opposite to God's shewing mercy to those that you think have been vicious persons, and are very unworthy of such mercy. Is others' unworthiness a just reason why God should not bestow mercy on them? And yet will God be hard, if, notwithstanding all your unworthiness, and the abominableness of your spirit and practice in his sight, he does not shew you mercy? You would have God bestow liberally on you, and upbraid not; but yet when he shews mercy to others, you are ready to upbraid as soon as you hear of it; you immediately are thinking with yourself how ill they have behaved themselves; and it may be your mouths on this occasion are open, enumerating and aggravating

the sins they have been guilty of. You would have God bury all your faults, and wholly blot out all your transgressions; but yet if he bestows mercy on others, it may be you will take that occasion to rake up all their old faults that you can think of. You do not much reflect on and condemn yourself for your baseness and unjust spirit towards others, in your opposition to their salvation; you do not quarrel with yourself, and condemn yourself for this; but yet you in your heart will quarrel with God, and fret at his dispensations, because you think he seems opposite to shewing mercy to you. One would think that the consideration of these things should for ever *stop your mouth.*

2. Consider how you have promoted others' damnation. Many of you, by the bad examples you have set, by corrupting the minds of others, by your sinful conversation, by leading them into, or strengthening them into sin, and by the mischief you have done in human society other ways that might be mentioned, have been guilty of those things that have tended to others' damnation. You have heretofore appeared on the side of sin and Satan, and have strengthened their interest, and have been many ways accessary to others' sins, have hardened their hearts, and thereby have done what has tended to the ruin of their souls.—Without doubt there are those here present who have been in a great measure the means of others' damnation. One man may really be a means of others' damnation as well as salvation. Christ charges the Scribes and Pharisees with this, Matth. xxiii. 13. "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." We have no reason to think that this congregation has none in it who are cursed from day to day by poor souls that are roaring out in hell, whose damnation they have been the means of, or have greatly contributed to.—There are many who contribute to their own children's damnation, by neglecting their education, by setting them bad examples, and bringing them up in sinful ways. They take some care of their bodies, but take little care of their poor souls; they provide for them bread to eat, but deny them the bread of life, that their famishing souls stand in need of. And are there no such parents here who have thus treated their children? If their children be not gone to hell, no thanks to them; it is not because they have not done what has tended to their destruction. Seeing therefore you have had no more regard to others' salvation, and have promoted their damnation, how justly might God leave you to perish yourself!

IV. If God should eternally cast you off, it would but be agreeable to your own behaviour towards *yourself;* and that in two respects:

1. In being so *careless* of your own salvation. You have refused to take care for your salvation, as God has counselled and commanded you from time to time; and why may not God neglect it, now you seek it of him? Is God obliged to be more careful of your happiness, than you are either of your own happiness or his glory? Is God bound to take that care for you, out of love to you, that you will not take for yourself, either from love to yourself, or regard to his authority? How long, and how greatly, have you neglected the welfare of your precious soul, refusing to take pains and deny yourself, or put yourself a little out of your way for your salvation, while God has been calling upon you!—Neither your duty to God, nor love to your own soul, were enough to induce you to do little things for your own eternal welfare; and yet do you now expect that God should do great things, putting forth almighty power, and exercising infinite mercy for it? You was urged to take care for your salvation, and not to put it off. You was told *that* was the best time before you grew older, and that it might be, if you would put it off, God would not hear you afterwards; but yet you would not hearken; you would run the venture of it. Now how justly might God order it so, that it should be too late, leaving you to seek in vain! You was told, that you would repent of it if you delayed; but you would not hear: how justly therefore may God give you cause to repent of it, by refusing to shew you mercy now! If God sees you going on in ways contrary to his commands and his glory, and requires you to forsake them, and tells you that they tend to the destruction of your own soul, and therefore counsels you to avoid them, and you refuse; how just would it be if God should be provoked by it, henceforward to be as careless of the good of your soul as you are yourself!

2. You have not only neglected your salvation, but you have wilfully taken direct courses to *undo* yourself. You have gone on in those ways and practices which have directly tended to your damnation, and have been perverse and obstinate in it. You cannot plead ignorance; you had all the light set before you that you could desire. God told you that you was undoing yourself; but yet you would do it. He told you that the path you was going in led to destruction, and counselled you to avoid it; but you would not hearken. How justly therefore may God leave you to be undone! You have obstinately persisted to travel in the way that leads to hell for a long time, contrary to God's continual counsels and commands, till it may be at length you are got almost to your journey's end, and are come near to hell's gate, and so begin to be sensible of your danger and misery; and now account it unjust and hard if God will not deliver you! You have destroyed yourself, and destroyed yourself wilfully, contrary to

God's repeated counsels, yea, and destroyed yourself in fighting against God. Now therefore, why do you blame any but *yourself*, if you are destroyed? If you will undo yourself in opposing God, and while God opposes you by his calls and counsels, and, it may be too, by the convictions of his Spirit, what can you object against it, if God now leaves you to be undone? You would have your own way, and did not like that God should oppose you in it, and your way was to ruin your own soul: how just therefore is it, if, now at length, God ceases to oppose you, and falls in with you, and lets your soul be ruined; and as you would destroy yourself, so should put to his hand to destroy you too! The ways you went on in had a natural tendency to your misery: If you would drink poison in opposition to God, and in contempt of him and his advice, who can you blame but yourself if you are poisoned, and so perish? If you would run into the fire against all restraints both of God's mercy and authority, you must even blame yourself if you are burnt.

Thus I have proposed some things to your consideration, which, if you are not exceeding blind, senseless, and perverse, will *stop your mouth*, and convince you that you stand justly condemned before God; and that he would in no wise deal hardly with you, but altogether *justly*, in denying you any mercy, and in refusing to hear your prayers, though you pray never so earnestly, and never so often, and continue in it never so long. God may utterly disregard your tears and moans, your heavy heart, your earnest desires, and great endeavours; and he may cast you into eternal destruction, without any regard to your welfare, denying you converting grace, and giving you over to Satan, and at last cast you into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, to be there to eternity, having no rest day or night, for ever glorifying his justice upon you in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

Object. But here many may still object, (for I am sensible it is a hard thing to stop sinners' mouths,) "God shews mercy to others that have done these things as well as I, yea, that have done a great deal worse than I."

Ans. 1. That does not prove that God is any way *bound* to shew mercy to you, or them either. If God bestows it on others, he does not so because he is bound to bestow it: He might if he had pleased, with glorious justice, have denied it them. If God bestows it on some, that does not prove that he is *bound* to bestow it on *any;* and if he is bound to bestow it on none, then he is not bound to bestow it on you. God is in debt to none; and if he gives to some that he is not in debt to, because it is his pleasure, that does not bring him into debt to others. It alters not the case as to you, whether others have it, or have it not: You

do not deserve damnation the less, than if mercy never had been bestowed on any at all. Matth. xx. 15. "Is thine eye evil, because mine is good?"

2. If this objection be good, then the exercise of God's mercy is not in his *own right*, and his grace is not his own to give. That which God may not dispose of as he pleases, is not his own; for that which is one's own, is at his own disposal; but if it be not God's own, then he is not capable of making a gift or present of it to any one; it is impossible to give what is a *debt*.—What is it that you would make of God? Must the great God be tied up, that he must not use his own pleasure in bestowing his own gifts, but if he bestows them on one, must be looked upon obliged to bestow them on another? Is not God worthy to have the same right, with respect to the gifts of his grace, that a man has to his money or goods? Is it because God is not so great, and should be more in subjection than man, that this cannot be allowed him? If any of you see cause to shew kindness to a neighbour, do all the rest of your neighbours come to you, and tell you, that you owe them so much as you have given to such a man? But this is the way that you deal with God, as though God were not worthy to have as absolute a property in his goods, as you have in yours.

At this rate God cannot make a present of any thing; he has nothing of his own to bestow: if he has a mind to shew peculiar favour to some, or to lay some particular persons under peculiar obligations to him, he cannot do it; because he has no special gift at his own disposal. If this be the case, why do you pray to God to bestow saving grace upon you? If God does not do fairly to deny it you, because he bestows it on others, then it is not worth your while to pray for it, but you may go and tell him that he has bestowed it on others as bad or worse than you, and so *demand* it of him as a debt. And at this rate persons never need to *thank* God for salvation, when it is bestowed; for what occasion is there to thank God for that which was not at his own disposal, and that he could not fairly have denied? The thing at bottom is, that men have low thoughts of God, and high thoughts of themselves; and therefore it is that they look upon God as having so little right, and they so much. Matth. xx. 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

3. God may justly shew greater respect to others than to you, for you have shewn greater respect to others than to God. You have rather chosen to offend God than men. God only shews a greater respect to others, who are by nature your equals, than to you, but you have shewn a greater respect to those that are infinitely inferior to God than to him. You have shewn a greater regard to *wicked* men than to God; you have honoured them

more, loved them better, and adhered to them rather than to him. Yea, you have honoured the devil, in many respects more than God: you have chosen his will and his interest, rather than God's will and his glory: you have chosen a little worldly pelf, rather than God: you have set more by a vile lust than by him: you have chosen these things, and rejected God. You have set your heart on these things, and cast God behind your back: And where is the injustice, if God is pleased to shew greater respect to others than to you, or if he chooses others and rejects you? You have shewn greater respect to vile and worthless things, and no respect to God's glory; and why may not God set his love on others, and have no respect to your happiness? You have shewn great respect to others, and not to God, whom you are laid under infinite obligations to respect above all; and why may not God shew respect to others, and not to you, who never have laid him under the least obligation?

And will you not be ashamed, notwithstanding all these things, still to open your mouth, to object and cavil about the *decrees* of God, and other things, that you cannot fully understand? Let the decrees of God be what they will, that alters not the case as to your *liberty*, any more than if God had only foreknown. And why is God to blame for decreeing things? Especially since he decrees nothing but *good*. How unbecoming an infinitely wise Being would it have been to have made a world, and let things run at random, without disposing events, or fore-ordering how they should come to pass! And what is that to you, how God has fore-ordered things, as long as your constant experience teaches you, that it does not hinder your doing what you choose to do! This you know, and your daily practice and behaviour amongst men declares that you are fully sensible of it with respect to yourself and others. Still to object, because there are some things in God's dispensations above your understanding, is exceedingly unreasonable. Your own conscience charges you with great guilt, and with those things that have been mentioned, let the secret things of God be what they will. Your conscience charges you with those vile dispositions, and that base behaviour towards God, that you would at any time most highly resent in your neighbour towards you, and that not a whit the less for any concern those secret counsels and mysterious dispensations of God may have in the matter. It is in vain for you to exalt yourself against an infinitely great, and holy, and just God. If you continue in it, it will be to your eternal shame and confusion, when hereafter you shall see at whose door all the blame of your misery lies.

I will finish what I have to say to natural men in the application of this doctrine, with a *caution* not to improve the doctrine to

discouragement. For though it would be *righteous* in God for ever to cast you off, and destroy you, yet it would also be just in God to save you, in and through Christ, who has made complete satisfaction for all sin. Rom. iii. 25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Yea, God may, through this Mediator, not only justly, but honourably shew you mercy. The blood of Christ is so precious, that it is fully sufficient to pay the debt you have contracted, and perfectly to vindicate the divine Majesty from all the dishonour cast upon it, by those many great sins of yours that have been mentioned. It was as great, and indeed a much greater thing, for Christ to die, than it would have been for you and all mankind to have burnt in hell to all eternity. Of such dignity and excellency is Christ in the eyes of God, that, seeing he has suffered so much for poor sinners, God is willing to be at peace with them, however vile and unworthy they have been, and on how many accounts soever the punishment would be *just.* So that you need not be at all discouraged from seeking mercy, for there is enough in Christ.

Indeed it would not become the glory of God's majesty to show mercy to you, so sinful and vile a creature, for any thing that you have done for such worthless and despicable things as your prayers, and other religious performances. It would be very dishonourable and unworthy of God so to do, and it is in vain to expect it. He will shew mercy only on Christ's account; and that according to his sovereign pleasure, on whom he pleases, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases. You cannot bring him under *obligation* by your works; do what you will, he will not look on himself obliged. But if it be his pleasure, he can honourably shew mercy through Christ to any sinner of you all, not one in this congregation excepted. Therefore here is encouragement for you still to seek and wait, notwithstanding all your wickedness; agreeable to Samuel's speech to the children of Israel, when they were terrified with the thunder and rain that God sent, and when guilt stared them in the face, 1 Sam. xii. 20. "Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart."

I would conclude this discourse by putting the godly in mind of the freeness and wonderfulness of the grace of God towards them. For such were the same of you. The case was just so with you as you have heard; you had such a wicked heart, you lived such a wicked life, and it would have been most just with God for ever to have cast you off: but he has had mercy upon

you; he hath made his glorious grace appear in your everlasting salvation. You had no love to God; but yet he has exercised unspeakable love to you. You have contemned God, and set light by him; but so great a value has God's grace set on you and your happiness, that you have been redeemed at the price of the blood of his own Son. You chose to be with Satan in his service; but yet God hath made you a joint heir with Christ of his glory. You was ungrateful for past mercies; yet God not only continued those mercies, but bestowed unspeakably greater mercies upon you. You refused to hear when God called; yet God heard you when you called. You abused the infiniteness of God's mercy to encourage yourself in sin against him; yet God has manifested the infiniteness of that mercy, in the exercises of it towards you. You have rejected Christ, and set him at nought; and yet he is become your Saviour. You have neglected your own salvation; but God has not neglected it. You have destroyed yourself; but yet in God has been your help. God has magnified his free grace towards you, and not to others; because he has chosen you, and it hath pleased him to set his love upon you.

Oh! what cause is here for praise! What obligations you are under to bless the Lord who hath dealt bountifully with you, and magnify his holy name! What cause for you to praise God in humility, to walk humbly before him. Ezek. xvi. 63. "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God!" You shall never open your mouth in boasting, or self-justification; but lie the lower before God for his mercy to you. You have reason, the more abundantly, to open your mouth in God's praises, that they may be continually in your mouth, both here and to all eternity, for his rich, unspeakable, and sovereign mercy to you, whereby he, and he alone, hath made you to differ from others.

DISCOURSE V.

THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

REV. v. 5, 6.

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.—

THE visions and revelations the apostle John had of the future events of God's providence, are here introduced with a vision of the book of God's decrees, by which those events were fore-ordained. This is represented (ver. 1.) as a book in the right hand of him who sat on the throne, "written within, and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals." Books in the form in which they were wont of old to be made, were broad leaves of parchment or paper, or something of that nature, joined together at one edge, and so rolled up together, and then sealed, or some way fastened together, to prevent their unfolding and opening. Hence we read of the roll of a book, Jer. xxxvi. 2. It seems to have been such a book that John had a vision of here; and therefore it is said to be "written within and on the back side," *i. e.* on the inside pages, and also on one of the outside pages, *viz.* that which was rolled in, in rolling the book up together. And it is said to be "sealed with seven seals," to signify that what was written in it was perfectly hidden and secret; or that God's decrees of future events are sealed, and shut up from all possibility of being discovered by creatures, till God is pleased to make them known. We find that seven is often used in scripture as the

number of perfection, to signify the superlative or most perfect degree of any thing; which probably arose from this, that on the seventh day God beheld the works of creation finished, and rested and rejoiced in them, as being complete and perfect.

When John saw this book, he tells us, he "saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." And that he wept much, because "no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon." And then tells us how his tears were dried up, *viz.* "that one of the elders said unto him, weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed," &c. as in the text. Though no man nor angel, nor any mere creature, was found either able to loose the seals, or worthy to be admitted to the privilege of reading the book; yet this was declared, for the comfort of this beloved disciple, that Christ was found both able and worthy. And we have an account in the succeeding chapters how he actually did it, opening the seals in order, first one, and then another, revealing what God had decreed should come to pass hereafter. And we have an account in this chapter of his coming and taking the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne, and of the joyful praises that were sung to him in heaven and earth on that occasion.

Many things might be observed in the words of the text; but it is to my present purpose only to take notice of the two distinct appellations here given to Christ.

1. He is called a *Lion*. *Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah.* He seems to be called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, in allusion to what Jacob said in his blessing of the tribes on his death-bed; who when he came to bless Judah, compares him to a lion, Gen. xlix. 9. "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" And also to the standard of the camp of Judah in the wilderness, on which was displayed a lion, according to the ancient tradition of the Jews. It is much on account of the valiant acts of David that the tribe of Judah, of which David was, is in Jacob's prophetical blessing compared to a lion; but more especially with an eye to Jesus Christ, who also was of that tribe, and was descended of David, and is in our text called "the root of David;" and therefore Christ is here called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

2. He is called a *Lamb*. John was told of a Lion that had prevailed to open the book, and probably expected to see a lion in his vision; but while he is expecting, behold a Lamb appears to open the book, an exceeding diverse kind of creature from a

lion. A lion is a devourer, one that is wont to make terrible slaughter of others; and no creature more easily falls a prey to him than a lamb. And Christ is here represented not only as a Lamb, a creature very liable to be slain, but a "Lamb as it had been slain," that is, with the marks of its deadly wounds appearing on it.

That which I would observe from the words, for the subject of my present discourse, is this, *viz.*——

"There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ."

The lion and the lamb, though very diverse kinds of creatures, yet have each their peculiar excellencies. The lion excels in strength, and in the majesty of his appearance and voice. The lamb excels in meekness and patience, besides the excellent nature of the creature as good for food, and yielding that which is fit for our clothing, and being suitable to be offered in sacrifice to God. But we see that Christ is in the text compared to both: because the diverse excellencies of both wonderfully meet in him—In handling this subject I would,

First, Shew wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Christ.

Secondly, How this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's acts,

And then make application.

First, I would shew wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ. Which appears in three things:

I. There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another.

II. There is in him a conjunction of such really diverse excellencies, as otherwise would have seemed to us utterly incompatible in the same subject.

III. Such diverse excellencies are exercised in him towards men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised towards the same object.

I. There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse from one another. Such are the various divine perfections and excellencies that Christ is possessed of. Christ is a divine person; and therefore has all the attributes of God. The difference between these is chiefly relative, and in our manner of conceiving them. And those which in this sense, are most diverse, meet in the person of Christ. I shall mention two instances.

1. There do meet in Jesus Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension. Christ, as he is God, is infinitely great and high above all. He is higher than the kings of the earth; for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is higher than the heavens, and higher than the highest angels of heaven. So great is he, that all men, all kings and princes, are as worms of the dust before him; all nations are as the drop of the bucket, and the light dust of the balance; yea, and angels themselves are as nothing before him. He is so high, that he is infinitely above any need of us; above our reach, that we cannot be profitable to him; and above our conceptions, that we cannot comprehend him. Prov. xxx. 4. "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" Our understandings, if we stretch them never so far, cannot reach up to his divine glory. Job xi. 8. "It is high as heaven, what canst thou do?" Christ is the Creator and great possessor of heaven and earth. He is sovereign Lord of all. He rules over the whole universe, and doth whatsoever pleaseth him. His knowledge is without bound; His wisdom is perfect, and what none can circumvent. His power is infinite, and none can resist him. His riches are immense and inexhaustible. His majesty is infinitely awful.

And yet he is one of infinite condescension. None are so low or inferior, but Christ's condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of them. He condescends not only to the angels, humbling himself to behold the things that are done in heaven, but he also condescends to such poor creatures as men: and that not only so as to take notice of princes and great men, but of those that are of meanest rank and degree, "the poor of the world," James ii. 5. Such as are commonly despised by their *fellow*-creatures, Christ does not despise. 1 Cor. i. 28. "Base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen." Christ condescends to take notice of beggars, Luke xvi. 22. and people of the most despised nations. In Christ Jesus is neither "Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." Col. iii. 11. He that is thus high, condescends to take a gracious notice of little children, Matt. xix. 14. "Suffer little children to come unto me." Yea, which is more, his condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of the most unworthy, sinful creatures, those that have no good deservings, and those that have infinite ill-deservings.

Yea, so great is his condescension, that it is not only sufficient to take some gracious notice of such as these, but sufficient for every thing that is an act of condescension. His condescension is great enough to become their friend; to become their companion, to unite their souls to him in spiritual marriage. It is enough to take their nature upon him, to become one of them, that he may be one with them. Yea, it is great enough to abase

himself yet lower for them, even to expose himself to shame and spitting; yea, to yield up himself to an ignominious death for them. And what act of condescension can be conceived of greater? Yet such an act as this, has his condescension yielded to for those that are so low and mean, despicable and unworthy!

Such a conjunction of infinite highness and low condescension, in the same person is admirable. We see, by manifold instances, what a tendency an high station has in men, to make them to be of quite a contrary disposition. If one worm be a little exalted above another, by having more dust, or a bigger dunghill, how much does he make of himself! What a distance does he keep from those that are below him! And a little condescension is what he expects should be made much of, and greatly acknowledged. Christ condescends to wash our feet; but how would great men, (or rather the bigger worms,) account themselves debased by acts of far less condescension!

2. There meet in Jesus Christ, infinite *justice* and infinite *grace*. As Christ is a divine person, he is infinitely holy and just; hating sin, and disposed to execute condign punishment for sin. He is the Judge of the world, and the infinitely just Judge of it, and will not at all acquit the wicked, or by any means clear the guilty.

And yet he is infinitely gracious and merciful. Though his justice be so strict with respect to all sin, and every breach of the law, yet he has grace sufficient for every sinner, and even the chief of sinners. And it is not only sufficient for the most unworthy to shew them mercy, and bestow some good upon them, but to bestow the greatest good; yea, it is sufficient to bestow all good upon them, and to do all things for them. There is no benefit or blessing that they can receive, so great but the grace of Christ is sufficient to bestow it on the greatest sinner that ever lived. And not only so, but so great is his grace, that nothing is too much as the means of this good. It is sufficient not only to do great things, but also to suffer in order to it; and not only to suffer, but to suffer most extremely, even unto death, the most terrible of natural evils; and not only death, but the most ignominious and tormenting, and every way the most terrible that men could inflict; yea, and greater sufferings than men could inflict, who could only torment the body. He had sufferings in his soul, that were the more immediate fruits of the wrath of God against the sins of those he undertakes for.

II. There do meet in the person of Christ such really diverse excellencies, which otherwise would have been thought utterly incompatible in the same subject; such as are conjoined in no other person whatever, either divine, human, or angelical; and

such as neither men nor angels would ever have imagined could have met together in the same person, had it not been seen in the person of Christ: I would give some instances.

1. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite *glory*, and lowest *humility*. Infinite glory, and the virtue of humility, meet in no other person but Christ. They meet in no created person; for no created person has infinite glory; and they meet in no other divine person but Christ. For though the divine nature be infinitely abhorrent to pride, yet humility is not properly predicable of God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, that exists only in the divine nature; because it is proper excellency only of a created nature; for it consists radically in a sense of a comparative lowness and littleness before God, or the great distance between God and the subject of this virtue; but it would be a contradiction to suppose any such thing in God.

But in Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, those two diverse excellencies are sweetly united. He is a person infinitely exalted in glory and dignity. Phil. ii. 6. "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." There is equal honour due to him with the Father. John v. 23. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." God himself says to him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. i. 8. And there is the same supreme respect and divine worship paid to him by the angels of heaven, as to God the Father, (ver. 6) "Let all the angels of God worship him."

But however he is thus above all, yet he is lowest of all in humility. There never was so great an instance of this virtue among either men or angels, as Jesus. None ever was so sensible of the distance between God and him, or had a heart so lowly before God, as the man Christ Jesus. Matth. xi. 29. What a wonderful spirit of humility appeared in him, when he was here upon earth, in all his behaviour! In his contentment in his mean outward condition, contentedly living in the family of Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, for thirty years together, and afterwards choosing outward meanness, poverty and contempt, rather than earthly greatness; in his washing his disciples' feet, and in all his speeches and deportment towards them; in his cheerfully sustaining the form of a servant through his whole life, submitting to such immense humiliation at death!

2. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite *majesty* and transcendent *meekness*. These again are two qualifications that meet together in no other person but Christ. Meekness, properly so called, is a virtue proper only to the creature: We scarcely ever find meekness mentioned as a divine attribute in scripture; at least not in the New Testament; for thereby seems to be signified, a calmness and quietness of Spirit, arising from

humility in mutable beings that are naturally liable to be put in a ruffle by the assaults of a tempestuous and injurious world. But Christ being both God and man, hath both infinite majesty and superlative meekness.

Christ was a person of infinite majesty. It is he that is spoken of, Psalm xlv. 3. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty." It is he that is mighty, that rideth on the heavens, and in his excellency on the sky. It is he that is terrible out of his holy places; who is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea: before whom a fire goeth, and burneth up his enemies round about; at whose presence the earth quakes, and the hills melt: who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; who rebukes the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up the rivers; whose eyes are as a flame of fire, from whose presence, and from the glory of whose power, the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction; who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who hath heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, and is the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of whose dominion there is no end.

And yet he was the most marvellous instance of meekness, and humble quietness of spirit, that ever was; agreeable to the *prophecies* of him, Matth. xxi. 4, 5. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, the King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." And, agreeable to what Christ declares of himself, Matth. xi. 29. "I am meek and lowly in heart." And agreeable to what was manifest in his behaviour: For there never was such an instance seen on earth, of a meek behaviour, under injuries and reproaches, and towards enemies; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. He had a wonderful spirit of forgiveness, was ready to forgive his worst enemies, and prayed for them with fervent and effectual prayers. With what meekness did he appear in the ring of soldiers that were contemning and mocking him; he was silent, and opened not his mouth, but went as a lamb to the slaughter. Thus is Christ a lion in majesty, and a lamb in meekness.

3. There meet in the person of Christ the deepest *reverence* towards God, and *equality* with God. Christ, when on earth, appeared full of holy reverence towards the Father. He paid the most reverential worship to him, praying to him with postures of reverence. Thus we read of his "kneeling down and praying," Luke xxii. 41. This became Christ, as one who had taken on him the human nature; but at the same time he existed in the di-

vine nature; whereby his person was in all respects equal to the person of the Father. God the Father hath no attribute or perfection that the Son hath not, in equal degree, and equal glory. These things meet in no other person but Jesus Christ.

4. There are conjoined in the person of Christ infinite *worthiness* of good, and the greatest *patience* under sufferings of evil. He was perfectly innocent, and deserved no suffering. He deserved nothing from God by any guilt of his own; and he deserved no ill from men. Yea, he was not only harmless and undeserving of suffering, but he was infinitely worthy, worthy of the infinite love of the Father, worthy of infinite and eternal happiness, and infinitely worthy of all possible esteem, love and service from all men. And yet he was perfectly patient under the greatest sufferings that ever were endured in this world. Heb. xii. 2. "He endured the cross, despising the shame." He suffered not from his Father for his faults, but ours; and he suffered from men not for his faults, but for those things on account of which he was infinitely worthy of their love and honour; which made his patience the more wonderful and the more glorious. 1 Pet. ii. 20, &c. "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." There is no such conjunction of innocence, worthiness, and patience under sufferings, as in the person of Christ.

5. In the person of Christ are conjoined an exceeding spirit of *obedience*, with supreme *dominion* over heaven and earth. Christ is the Lord of all things in two respects: He is so, as God-man and Mediator: and thus his dominion is appointed, and given him of the Father. Having it by delegation from God, he is as it were the Father's vicegerent. But he is the Lord of all things in another respect, *viz.* as he is (by his original nature) God; and so he is by natural right the Lord of all, and supreme over all as much as the Father. Thus, he has dominion over the world, not by delegation, but in his own right. He is not an under God, as the Arians suppose, but, to all intents and purposes, supreme God.

And yet in the same person is found the greatest spirit of obedience to the commands and laws of God that ever was in the

universe; which was manifest in his obedience here in this world. John xiv. 31. "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." John xv. 10. "Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The greatness of his obedience appears in its perfection, and in his obeying commands of such exceeding difficulty. Never any one received commands from God of such difficulty, and that were so great a trial of obedience, as Jesus Christ. One of God's commands to him was, that he should yield himself to those dreadful sufferings that he underwent. See John x. 18. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. This commandment have I received of my Father." And Christ was thoroughly obedient to this command of God. Heb. v. 8. "Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered." Philip. ii. 8. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Never was there such an instance of obedience in man or angel as this, though he was at the same time supreme Lord of both angels and men.

6. In the person of Christ are conjoined absolute *sovereignty* and perfect *resignation*. This is another unparalleled conjunction. Christ, as he is God, is the absolute sovereign of the world; the sovereign disposer of all events. The decrees of God are all his sovereign decrees; and the work of creation, and all God's works of providence, are his sovereign works. It is he that worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. Col. i. 16, 17. "By him, and through him, and to him, are all things." John v. 17. "The Father worketh thereto, and I work." Matth. viii. 3. "I will, be thou clean."

But yet Christ was the most wonderful instance of resignation that ever appeared in the world. He was absolutely and perfectly resigned when he had a near and immediate prospect of his terrible sufferings, and the dreadful cup that he was to drink. The idea and expectation of this made his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and put him into such an agony, that his sweat was as it were great drops or clots of blood, falling down to the ground. But in such circumstances he was wholly resigned to the will of God. Matth. xxvi. 39. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Verse 42. "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

7. In Christ do meet together *self-sufficiency*, and an entire *trust* and reliance on God; which is another conjunction peculiar to the person of Christ. As he is a divine person, he is self-sufficient, standing in need of nothing. All creatures are dependent on him, but he is dependent on none, but is absolutely independent. His proceeding from the Father, in his eternal generation

or filiation, argues no proper dependence on the *will* of the Father; for that proceeding was natural and *necessary*, and not arbitrary. But yet Christ entirely trusted in God: His enemies say that of him, "He trusted in God that he would deliver him," Matth. xxvii. 43. And the apostle testifies, 1 Pet. ii. 23. "That he committed himself to God."

III. Such diverse excellencies are expressed in him towards men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised towards the same object; as particularly these three, justice, mercy, and truth. The same that are mentioned, Psalm. lxxxv. 10. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The strict justice of God, and even his revenging justice, and that against the sins of men, never was so gloriously manifested as in Christ. He manifested an infinite regard to the attribute of God's justice, in that, when he had a mind to save sinners, he was willing to undergo such extreme sufferings, rather than that their salvation should be to the injury of the honour of that attribute. And as he is the Judge of the world, he doth himself exercise strict justice; he will not clear the guilty, nor at all acquit the wicked in judgment. Yet how wonderfully is infinite mercy towards sinners displayed in him! And what glorious and ineffable grace and love have been, and are exercised by him, towards sinful men! Though he be the just Judge of a sinful world, yet he is also the Saviour of the world. Though he be a consuming fire to sin, yet he is the light and life of sinners. Rom. iii. 25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

So the immutable truth of God, in the threatenings of his law against the sins of men, was never so manifested as it is in Jesus Christ; for there never was any other so great a trial of the unalterableness of the truth of God in those threatenings, as when sin came to be imputed to his own Son. And then in Christ has been seen already an actual complete accomplishment of those threatenings, which never has been, nor will be seen in any other instance; because the eternity that will be taken up in fulfilling those threatenings on others, never will be finished. Christ manifested an infinite regard to this truth of God in his sufferings. And, in his judging the world, he makes the covenant of works, that contains those dreadful threatenings, his rule of judgment. He will see to it, that it is not infringed in the least jot or tittle: he will do nothing contrary to the threatenings of the law, and

their complete fulfilment. And yet in him we have many great and precious promises, promises of perfect deliverance from the penalty of the law. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. And in him are all the promises of God, yea, and Amen.

Having thus shewn wherein there is an admirable conjunction of excellencies in Jesus Christ, I now proceed,

Secondly, To shew how this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's *acts*.

I. It appears in what Christ did in taking on him our nature. In this act, his infinite condescension wonderfully appeared, that he who was God should become man; that the word should be made flesh, and should take on him a nature infinitely below his original nature! And it appears yet more remarkably in the low circumstances of his incarnation: he was conceived in the womb of a poor young woman, whose poverty appeared in this, when she came to offer sacrifices of her purification, she brought what was allowed of in the law only in case of poverty: as Luke ii. 24, "According to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." This was allowed only in case the person was so poor that she was not able to offer a lamb.—Levit. xii. 8.

And though his infinite condescension thus appeared in the manner of his incarnation, yet his divine dignity also appeared in it; for though he was conceived in the womb of a poor virgin, yet he was conceived there by the power of the Holy Ghost. And his divine dignity also appeared in the holiness of his conception and birth. Though he was conceived in the womb of one of the corrupt race of mankind, yet he was conceived and born without sin; as the angel said to the blessed Virgin, Luke i. 35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

His infinite condescension marvellously appeared in the manner of his birth. He was brought forth in a stable, because there was no room for them in the inn. The inn was taken up by others, that were looked upon as persons of greater account. The blessed Virgin, being poor and despised, was turned or shut out. Though she was in such necessitous circumstances, yet those that counted themselves her betters would not give place to her; and therefore, in the time of her travail, she was forced to betake herself to a stable; and when the child was born, it was wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. There Christ lay a little infant; and there he eminently appeared as a lamb. But yet this feeble infant born thus in a stable, and laid in a manger,

was born to conquer and triumph over Satan, that roaring lion. He came to subdue the mighty powers of darkness, and make a shew of them openly; and so to restore peace on earth, and to manifest God's good-will towards men, and to bring glory to God in the highest; according as the end of his birth was declared by the joyful songs of the glorious hosts of angels appearing to the shepherds at the same time that the infant lay in the manger; whereby his divine dignity was manifested.

II. This admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in the acts and various passages of Christ's life. Though Christ dwelt in mean outward circumstances, whereby his condescension and humility especially appeared, and his majesty was veiled; yet his divine dignity and glory did in many of his acts shine through the veil, and it illustriously appeared, that he was not only the Son of man, but the great God.

Thus, in the circumstances of his infancy, his outward meanness appeared; yet there was something then to shew forth his divine dignity, in the wise men being stirred up to come from the east to give honour to him, their being led by a miraculous star, and coming and falling down and worshipping him, and presenting him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. His humility and meekness wonderfully appeared in his subjection to his mother and reputed father when he was a child. Herein he appeared as a lamb. But his divine glory broke forth and shone when, at twelve years old, he disputed with doctors in the temple. In that he appeared, in some measure, as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah.*

And so, after he entered on his public ministry, his marvellous humility and meekness was manifested in his choosing to appear in such mean outward circumstances, and in being contented in them, when he was so poor that he had not where to lay his head, and depended on the charity of some of his followers for his subsistence; as appears by Luke viii. at the beginning. How meek, condescending, and familiar, his treatment of his disciples; his discourses with them, treating them as a father his children; yea, as friends and companions. How patient, bearing such affliction and reproach, and so many injuries from the Scribes and Pharisees, and others. In these things he appeared *as a Lamb.* And yet he at the same time did in many ways shew forth his divine majesty and glory, particularly in the miracles he wrought, which were evidently divine works, and manifested omnipotent power, and so declared him to be *the Lion of the tribe of Judah.* His wonderful and miraculous works plainly shewed him to be the God of nature; in that it appeared by them that he had all nature in his hands, and could lay an arrest upon it, and stop and change its course as he pleased. In healing the sick, and opening the

eyes of the blind, and unstopping the ears of the deaf, and healing the lame; he shewed that he was the God that framed the eye, and created the ear, and was the author of the frame of man's body. By the dead's rising at his command, it appeared that he was the author and fountain of life, and that "God the Lord, to whom belong the issues from death." By his walking on the sea in a storm, when the waves were raised, he shewed himself to be that God spoken of in Job ix. 8. "That treadeth on the waves of the sea." By his stilling the storm, and calming the rage of the sea, by his powerful command, saying, "Peace, be still," he shewed that he has the command of the universe, and that he is that God who brings things to pass by the word of his power, who speaks and tis done, who commands and it stands fast; Psalm lxv. 7. "Who stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves." And Psalm cvii. 29. "That maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." And Psalm lxxxix. 8, 9. "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them."—Christ, by casting out devils, remarkably appeared as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, and shewed that he was stronger than the roaring lion, that seeks whom he may devour. He commanded them to come out, and they were forced to obey. They were terribly afraid of him; they fall down before him, and beseech him not to torment them. He forces a whole legion of them to forsake their hold, by his powerful word; and they could not so much as enter into the swine without his leave. He shewed the glory of his omniscience, by telling the thoughts of men; as we have often an account. Herein he appeared to be that God spoken of, Amos iv. 13. "That declareth unto man what is his thought." Thus, in the midst of his meanness and humiliation, his divine glory appeared in his miracles. John ii. 11. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory."

And though Christ ordinarily appeared without outward glory, and in great obscurity, yet at a certain time he threw off the veil, and appeared in his divine majesty, so far as it could be outwardly manifested to men in this frail state, when he was transfigured in the mount. The apostle Pet. 2 Pet. i. 16, 17. was an "eye-witness of his majesty, when he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; which voice that came from heaven they heard, when they were with him in the holy mount.

And at the same time that Christ was wont to appear in such meekness, condescension, and humility, in his familiar discourses

with his disciples, appearing therein as the Lamb of God; he was also wont to appear as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, with divine authority and majesty, in his so sharply rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees, and other hypocrites.

III. This admirable conjunction of excellencies remarkably appears in his offering up himself a sacrifice for sinners in his last sufferings. As this was the greatest thing in all the works of redemption, the greatest act of Christ in that work, so in this act especially does there appear that admirable conjunction of excellencies that has been spoken of. Christ never so much appeared as a lamb, as when he was slain: "He came like a lamb to the slaughter," Isaiah liii. 7. Then he was offered up to God as a lamb without blemish, and without spot: Then especially did he appear to be the anti-type of the lamb of the passover: 1 Cor. v. 7. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." And yet in that act he did in an especial manner appear as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah;* yea, in this above all other acts, in many respects, as may appear in the following things.

1. Then was Christ in the greatest degree of his humiliation, and yet by that, above all other things, his divine glory appears. Christ's humiliation was great, in being born in such a low condition, of a poor virgin, and in a stable. His humiliation was great, in being subject to Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, and afterwards living in poverty, so as not to have where to lay his head; and in suffering such manifold and bitter reproaches as he suffered, while he went about preaching and working miracles. But his humiliation was never so great as it was in his last sufferings, beginning with his agony in the garden, till he expired on the cross. Never was he subject to such ignominy as then; never did he suffer so much pain in his body, or so much sorrow in his soul; never was he in so great an exercise of his condescension, humility, meekness, and patience, as he was in these last sufferings; never was his divine glory and majesty covered with so thick and dark a veil; never did he so empty himself and make himself of no reputation, as at this time. And yet, never was his divine glory so manifested, by any act of his, as in yielding himself up to these sufferings. When the fruit of it came to appear, and the mystery and ends of it to be unfolded in its issue, then did the glory of it appear; then did it appear as the most glorious act of Christ that ever he exercised towards the creature. This act of his is celebrated by the angels and hosts of heaven with peculiar praises, as that which is above all others glorious, as you may see in the context, (ver. 9, &c.) "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed

us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

2. He never in any act gave so great a manifestation of love to God, and yet never so manifested his love to those that were enemies to God, as in that act. Christ never did any thing whereby his love to the Father was so eminently manifested, as in his laying down his life, under such inexpressible sufferings, in obedience to his command, and for the vindication of the honour of his authority and majesty; nor did ever any mere creature give such a testimony of love to God as that was. And yet this was the greatest expression of his love to sinful men, who were enemies to God: Rom. v. 10. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son." The greatness of Christ's love to such, appears in nothing so much as in its being dying love. That blood of Christ which fell in great drops to the ground, in his agony, was shed from love to God's enemies and his own. That shame and spitting, that torment of body, and that exceeding sorrow, even unto death, which he endured in his soul, was what he underwent from love to rebels against God, to save them from hell, and to purchase for them eternal glory. Never did Christ so eminently shew his regard to God's honour, as in offering up himself a victim to justice. And yet in this above all, he manifested his love to them who dishonoured God, so as to bring such guilt on themselves, that nothing less than his blood could atone for it.

3. Christ never so eminently appeared *for* divine justice, and yet never suffered so much *from* divine justice, as when he offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins. In Christ's great sufferings, did his infinite regard to the honour of God's justice distinguishingly appear; for it was from regard to *that* that he thus humbled himself. And yet in these sufferings, Christ was the mark of the vindictive expressions of that very justice of God. Revenging justice then spent all its force upon him, on account of our guilt; which made him sweat blood, and cry out upon the cross, and probably rent his vitals—broke his heart, the fountain of blood, or some other blood vessels—and by the violent fermentation turned his blood to water. For the blood and water that issued out of his side, when pierced by the spear, seems to have been extravasated blood; and so there might be a kind of literal

fulfilment of Psalm xxii. 14. "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." And this was the way and means by which Christ stood up for the honour of God's justice, *viz.* by thus suffering its terrible executions. For when he had undertaken for sinners, and had substituted himself in their room, divine justice could have its due honour no other way than by his suffering its revenges.—In this the diverse excellencies that met in the person of Christ appeared, *viz.* his infinite regard to God's justice, and such love to those that have exposed themselves to it, as induced him thus to yield himself a sacrifice to it.

4. Christ's holiness never so illustriously shone forth as it did in his last sufferings; and yet he never was to such a degree treated as guilty. Christ's holiness never had such a trial as it had then; and therefore never had so great a manifestation. When it was tried in this furnace, it came forth as gold, or as silver purified seven times. His holiness then above all appeared in his stedfast pursuit of the honour of God, and in his obedience to him. For his yielding himself unto death was transcendently the greatest act of obedience that ever was paid to God by any one since the foundation of the world.

And yet then Christ was in the greatest degree treated as a wicked person would have been. He was apprehended and bound as a malefactor. His accusers represented him as a most wicked wretch. In his sufferings before his crucifixion, he was treated as if he had been the worst and vilest of mankind; and then, he was put to a kind of death, that none but the worst sort of malefactors were wont to suffer, those that were most abject in their persons, and guilty of the blackest crimes. And he suffered as though guilty from God himself, by reason of our guilt imputed to him; for he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, he was made subject to wrath, as if he had been sinful himself. He was made a curse for us.

Christ never so greatly manifested his hatred of sin, as against God, as in his dying to take away the dishonour that sin had done to God; and yet never was he to such a degree subject to the terrible effects of God's hatred of sin, and wrath against it, as he was then. In this appears those diverse excellencies meeting in Christ, *viz.* love to God, and grace to sinners.

5. He never was so dealt with, as unworthy, as in his last sufferings; and yet it is chiefly on account of them that he is accounted worthy. He was therein dealt with as if he had not been worthy to live: They cry out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him." John xix. 15. And they prefer Barabbas before him. And he suffered from the Father, as one whose demerits were infinite, by reason of our demerits, that were laid upon him. And

yet it was especially by that act of his subjecting himself to those sufferings, that he merited, and on the account of which chiefly he was accounted worthy of the glory of his exaltation. Philip. ii. 8, 9. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; wherefore God hath highly exalted him." And we see that it is on this account chiefly, that he is extolled as worthy by saints and angels in the context; "worthy," say they, "is the Lamb that was slain." This shews an admirable conjunction in him of infinite dignity, and infinite condescension and love to the infinitely unworthy.

6. Christ in his last sufferings suffered most extremely from those towards whom he was then manifesting his greatest act of love. He never suffered so much from his Father, (though not from any hatred to him, but from hatred to our sins,) for he then *forsook* him, or took away the comforts of his presence; and then "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief," as Isaiah liii. 10. And yet never gave so great a manifestation of love to God as then, as has been already observed. So Christ never suffered so much from the hands of men as he did then; and yet never was in so high an exercise of love to men. He never was so ill treated by his disciples; who were so unconcerned about his sufferings, that they would not watch with him one hour in his agony; and when he was apprehended, all forsook him and fled, except Peter, who denied him with oaths and curses. And yet then he was suffering, shedding his blood, and pouring out his soul unto death for them. Yea, he probably was then shedding his blood for some of them that shed his blood; for whom he prayed while they were crucifying him; and who were probably afterwards brought home to Christ, by Peter's preaching. (Compare Luke xxiii. 34; Acts ii. 23, 36, 37, 41; and chap. iii. 17; and chap. iv. 4.) This shews an admirable meeting of justice and grace in the redemption of Christ.

7. It was in Christ's last sufferings, above all, that he was delivered up to the power of his enemies: and yet by these, above all, he obtained victory over his enemies. Christ never was so in his enemies' hands, as in the time of his last sufferings. They sought his life before: but from time to time they were restrained, and Christ escaped out of their hands; and this reason is given for it, that *his time was not yet come.* But now they were suffered to work their will upon him; he was in a great degree delivered up to the malice and cruelty of both wicked men and devils. And therefore when Christ's enemies came to apprehend him, he says to them, Luke xx. 53. "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hand against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

And yet it was principally by means of those sufferings that he conquered and overthrew his enemies. Christ never so effectually bruised Satan's head, as when Satan bruised his heel. The weapon with which Christ warred against the devil, and obtained a most complete victory and glorious triumph over him, was the cross, the instrument and weapon with which he thought he had overthrown Christ, and brought on him shameful destruction. Col. ii. 14, 15. "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances—nailing it to his cross: And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." In his last sufferings, Christ sapped the very foundations of Satan's kingdom; he conquered his enemies in their own territories, and beat them with their own weapons: as David cut off Goliah's head with his own sword. The devil had as it were swallowed up Christ, as the whale did Jonah; but it was deadly poison to him; he gave him a mortal wound in his own bowels. He was soon sick of his morsel, and was forced to do by him as the whale did by Jonah. To this day he is heart-sick of what he then swallowed as his prey. In those sufferings of Christ was laid the foundation of all that glorious victory he has already obtained over Satan, in the overthrow of his heathenish kingdom in the Roman empire, and all the success the gospel has had since; and also of all his future and still more glorious victory that is to be obtained in the earth. Thus Samson's riddle is most eminently fulfilled, Judges xiv. 14. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." And thus the true Samson does more towards the destruction of his enemies at his death than in his life; in yielding up himself to death, he pulls down the temple of Dagon, and destroys many thousands of his enemies, even while they are making themselves sport in his sufferings; and so he whose type was the ark, pulls down Dagon, and breaks off his head and hands in his own temple, even while he is brought in there as Dagon's captive.

Thus Christ appeared at the same time, and in the same act, as both a lion and a lamb. He appeared as a lamb in the hands of his cruel enemies; as a lamb in the paws, and between the devouring jaws of a roaring lion; yea, he was a lamb actually slain by this lion; and yet at the same time, as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, he conquers and triumphs over Satan, destroying his own devourer; as Samson did the lion that roared upon him, when he rent him as he would a kid. And in nothing has Christ appeared so much as a lion, in glorious strength destroying his enemies, as when he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. In his greatest weakness he was most strong; and when he suffered most from his enemies, he brought the greatest confusion on his ene-

mies.—Thus this admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies was manifest in Christ, in his offering up himself to God in his last sufferings.

IV. It is still manifest in his acts, in his present state of exaltation in heaven. Indeed, in his exalted state, he most eminently appears in manifestation of those excellencies, on the account of which he is compared to a lion; but still he appears as a lamb; Rev. xiv. 1. "And I looked, and lo, a lion stood on Mount Sion;" as in his state of humiliation he chiefly appeared as a lamb, and yet did not appear without manifestation of his divine majesty and power, as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah.* Though Christ be now at the right hand of God, exalted as King of heaven, and Lord of the universe; yet as he still is in the human nature, he still excels in humility. Though the man Christ Jesus be the highest of all creatures in heaven, yet he as much excels them all in humility as he doth in glory and dignity; for none sees so much of the distance between God and him as he does.—And though he now appears in such glorious majesty and dominion in heaven, yet he appears as a lamb in his condescending, mild, and sweet treatment of his saints there; for he is a Lamb still, even amidst the throne of his exaltation; and he that is the shepherd of the whole flock is himself a lamb, and goes before them in heaven as such. Rev. vii. 17. "For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Though in heaven every knee bows to him, and though the angels fall down before him, adoring him, yet he treats his saints with infinite condescension, mildness and endearment. And in his acts towards the saints on earth, he still appears as a Lamb, manifesting exceeding love and tenderness in his intercession for them, as one that has had experience of affliction and temptation. He has not forgot what these things are; nor has he forgot how to pity those that are subject to them. And he still manifests his lamb-like excellencies, in his dealings with his saints on earth, in admirable forbearance, love, gentleness, and compassion. Behold him instructing, supplying, supporting, and comforting them; often coming to them, and manifesting himself to them by his Spirit, that he may sup with them, and they with him. Behold him admitting them to sweet communion, enabling them with boldness and confidence to come to him, and solacing their hearts. And in heaven Christ still appears, as it were, with the marks of his wounds upon him; and so appears as a Lamb as it had been slain; as he was represented in vision to St. John in the text, when he appeared to open the

book sealed with seven seals, which is part of the glory of his exaltation.

V. And *lastly*, this admirable conjunction of excellencies will be manifest in Christ's acts at the last judgment. He then, above all other times, will appear as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* in infinite greatness and majesty, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all the holy angels, and the earth shall tremble before him, and the hills shall melt. This is he (Rev. xx. 11.) "that shall sit on a great white throne, before whose face the earth and heaven shall flee away." He will then appear in the most dreadful and amazing manner to the wicked. The devils tremble at the thought of that appearance; and when it shall be, the kings and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, to hide them from the face and wrath of the Lamb. And none can declare or conceive of the amazing manifestations of wrath in which he will then appear towards these; or the trembling and astonishment, the shrieking and gnashing of teeth, with which they shall stand before his judgment-seat, and receive the terrible sentence of his wrath.

And yet he will at the same time appear as a Lamb to his saints; he will receive them as friends and brethren, treating them with infinite mildness and love. There shall be nothing in him terrible to them; but towards them he will clothe himself wholly with sweetness and endearment. The church shall be then admitted to him as his bride; that shall be her wedding-day. The saints shall all be sweetly invited to come with him to inherit the kingdom, and reign in it with him to all eternity.

APPLICATION.

I. From this doctrine we may learn one reason why Christ is called by such a variety of names, and held forth under such a variety of representations in scripture. It is the better to signify and exhibit to us that variety of excellencies that meet together, and are conjoined in him. Many appellations are mentioned together in one verse, Isaiah ix. 6. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." It shews a wonderful conjunction of excellencies, that the same person should be a Son, born and given, and yet be the everlast-

ing Father, without beginning or end; that he should be a child, and yet be he whose name is Counsellor, and the mighty God; and well may his name, in whom such things are conjoined, be called Wonderful.

By reason of the same wonderful conjunction, Christ is represented by a great variety of sensible things, that are on some account excellent. Thus in some places he is called a Sun, as Mal. iv. 2. in others a Star, Numb. xxiv. 17. And he is especially represented by the Morning-star, as being that which excels all other stars in brightness, and is the forerunner of the day. Rev. xxii. 16. And, as in our text, he is compared to a lion in one verse, and a lamb in the next, so sometimes he is compared to a roe or a young hart, another creature most diverse from a lion. So in some places he is called a rock, in others he is compared to a pearl. In some places he is called a man of war, and the Captain of our Salvation, in other places he is represented as a bridegroom. In the second chapter of Canticles, the 1st verse, he is compared to a rose and lily, that are sweet and beautiful flowers; in the next verse but one, he is compared to a tree bearing sweet fruit. In Isaiah liii. 2. he is called a Root out of a dry ground; but elsewhere, instead of that, he is called the Tree of Life, that grows (not in a dry or barren ground, but) "in the midst of the paradise of God," Rev. ii. 7.

II. Let the consideration of this wonderful meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ induce you to accept of him, and close with him as your Saviour. As all manner of excellencies meet in him, so there are concurring in him all manner of arguments and motives, to move you to choose him for your Saviour, and every thing that tends to encourage poor sinners to come and put their trust in him: his fulness and all-sufficiency as a Saviour gloriously appear in that variety of excellencies that has been spoken of.

Fallen man is in a state of exceeding great misery, and is helpless in it; he is a poor weak creature, like an infant cast out in its blood in the day that it is born. But Christ is *the Lion of the tribe of Judah;* he is strong, though we are weak; he hath prevailed to do that for us which no creature else could do. Fallen man is a mean despicable creature, a contemptible worm; but Christ, who has undertaken for us, is infinitely honourable and worthy. Fallen man is polluted, but Christ is infinitely holy; fallen man is hateful, but Christ is infinitely lovely; fallen man is the object of God's indignation, but Christ is infinitely dear to him. We have dreadfully provoked God, but Christ has performed that righteousness which is infinitely precious in God's eyes.

And here is not only infinite strength and infinite worthiness, but infinite condescension, and love, and mercy, as great as power and dignity. If you are a poor, distressed sinner, whose heart is ready to sink for fear that God never will have mercy on you, you need not be afraid to go to Christ, for fear that he is either unable or unwilling to help you. Here is a strong foundation, and an inexhaustible treasure, to answer the necessities of your poor soul; and here is infinite grace and gentleness to invite and embolden a poor, unworthy, fearful soul to come to it. If Christ accepts of you, you need not fear but that you will be safe; for he is a strong lion for your defence. And if you come, you need not fear but that you shall be accepted; for he is like a Lamb to all that come to him, and receives them with infinite grace and tenderness. It is true he has awful majesty; he is the great God, and infinitely high above you; but there is this to encourage and embolden the poor sinner, that Christ is man as well as God; he is a creature, as well as the Creator; and he is the most humble and lowly in heart of any creature in heaven or earth. This may well make the poor unworthy creature bold in coming to him. You need not hesitate one moment; but may run to him, and cast yourself upon him. You will certainly be graciously and meekly received by him. Though he is a lion, he will only be a lion to your enemies; but he will be a lamb to you. It could not have been conceived, had it not been so in the person of Christ, that there could have been so much in any Saviour, that is inviting, and tending to encourage sinners to trust in him. Whatever your circumstances are, you need not be afraid to come to such a Saviour as this. Be you never so wicked a creature, here is worthiness enough; be you never so poor, and mean, and ignorant a creature, there is no danger of being despised; for though he be so much greater than you, he is immensely more humble than you. Any one of you that is a father or mother, will not despise one of your own children that comes to you in distress; much less danger is there of Christ despising you, if you in your heart come to him. Here let me a little expostulate with the poor, burdened, distressed soul.

1. What are you afraid of, that you dare not venture your soul upon Christ? Are you afraid that he cannot save you; that he is not strong enough to conquer the enemies of your soul? But how can you desire one stronger than the "mighty God?" as Christ is called, Isa. ix. 6. Is there need of greater than infinite strength? Are you afraid that he will not be willing to stoop so low as to take any gracious notice of you? But then, look on him, as he stood in the ring of soldiers, exposing his blessed face to be buffeted and spit upon by them! Behold him bound, with

his back uncovered to those that smote him! And behold him hanging on the cross! Do you think that he that had condescension enough to stoop to these things, and that for his crucifiers, will be unwilling to accept of you, if you come to him? Or, are you afraid that if he does accept of you, that God the Father will not accept of him for you? But consider, will God reject his own Son, in whom his infinite delight is, and has been from all eternity, and who is so united to him, that if he should reject him he would reject himself?

2. What is there that you can desire should be in a Saviour, that is not in Christ? Or, wherein should you desire a Saviour should be otherwise than Christ is? What excellency is there wanting? What is there that is great or good? What is there that is venerable or winning? What is there that is adorable or endearing? Or, what can you think of that would be encouraging, which is not to be found in the person of Christ? Would you have your Saviour to be great and honourable, because you are not willing to be beholden to a mean person? And, is not Christ a person honourable enough to be worthy that you should be dependent on him? Is he not a person high enough to be appointed to so honourable a work as your salvation? Would you not only have a Saviour of high degree, but would you have him, notwithstanding his exaltation and dignity, to be made also of low degree, that he might have experience of afflictions and trials, that he might learn by the things that he has suffered, to pity them that suffer and are tempted? And has not Christ been made low enough for you? And has he not suffered enough? Would you not only have him possess experience of the afflictions you now suffer, but also of that amazing wrath that you fear hereafter, that he may know how to pity those that are in danger, and afraid of it? This Christ has had experience of, which experience gave him a greater sense of it, a thousand times, than you have, or any man living has. Would you have your Saviour to be one who is near to God, that so his mediation might be prevalent with him? And can you desire him to be nearer to God than Christ is, who is his only begotten Son, of the same essence with the Father? And would you not only have him near to God, but also near to you, that you may have free access to him? And would you have him nearer to you than to be in the same nature, united to you by a spiritual union, so close as to be fitly represented by the union of the wife to the husband, of the branch to the vine, of the member to the head; yea, so as to be one spirit? For so he will be united to you, if you accept of him. Would you have a Saviour that has given some great and extraordinary testimony of mercy and love to sinners, by something that he has done, as well as by what he says?—And can you think

or conceive of greater things than Christ has done? Was it not a great thing for him, who was God, to take upon him human nature; to be not only God, but man thenceforward to all eternity? But would you look upon suffering for sinners to be a yet greater testimony of love to sinners, than merely doing, though it be never so extraordinary a thing that he has done? And would you desire that a Saviour should suffer more than Christ has suffered for sinners? What is there wanting, or what would you add if you could, to make him more fit to be your Saviour? But further, to induce you to accept of Christ as your Saviour, consider two things particularly.

(1.) How much Christ appears as the Lamb of God in his invitations to you to come to him and trust in him. With what sweet grace and kindness does he, from time to time, call and invite you; as Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." And Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." How gracious is he here in inviting every one that thirsts, and in so repeating his invitation over and over, "Come ye to the waters; come, buy and eat, yea, come!" Mark the excellency of that entertainment, which he invites you to accept of, "Come, buy wine and milk!" your poverty, having nothing to pay for it, shall be no objection,—"Come, he that hath no money, come without money, and without price!" What gracious arguments and expostulations he uses with you! "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." As much as to say, It is altogether needless for you to continue labouring and toiling for that which can never serve your turn, seeking rest in the world, and in your own righteousness:—I have made abundant provision for you, of that which is really good, and will fully satisfy your desires, and answer your end, and stand ready to accept of you: You need not be afraid; if you will come to me, I will engage to see all your wants supplied, and you made a happy creature. As he promises in the third verse, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: Hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." And so, Prov. ix. at the beginning. How gracious and sweet is the invitation there! "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither;" let you be never so poor, ignorant, and blind a creature, you shall be welcome. And in the following words, Christ sets forth the provision that he has made for you; "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." You are in a

poor famishing state, and have nothing wherewith to feed your perishing soul; you have been seeking something, but yet remain destitute. Hearken, how Christ calls you to eat of his bread, and to drink of the wine that he hath mingled! And how much like a lamb does Christ appear in Matth. xi. 28—30. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." O thou poor distressed soul! whoever thou art, consider that Christ mentions thy very case, when he calls to them who labour and are heavy laden! How he repeatedly promises you rest if you come to him! In the 28th verse he says, "I will give you rest." And in the 29th verse, "Ye shall find rest to your souls." This is what you want. This is the thing you have been so long in vain seeking after. Oh, how sweet would rest be to you, if you could but obtain it! Come to Christ, and you shall obtain it. And hear how Christ, to encourage you, represents himself as a lamb! He tells you, that he is meek and lowly in heart; and are you afraid to come to such an one? And again, Rev. iii. 20. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with me." Christ condescends not only to call you to him, but he comes to you; he comes to your door, and there knocks. He might send an officer and seize you as a rebel and vile malefactor; but instead of that, he comes and knocks at your door, and seeks that you would receive him into your house, as your friend and Saviour. And he not only knocks at your door, but he stands there waiting, while you are backward and unwilling. And not only so, but he makes promises what he will do for you, if you will admit him, what privileges he will admit you to; he will "sup with you, and you with him." And again, Rev. xxii. 16, 17. "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning-star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come: And let him that heareth say, Come: And let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." How does Christ here graciously set before you his own winning attractive excellency! And how does he condescend to declare to you not only his own invitation, but the invitation of the Spirit and the bride, if by any means he might encourage you to come! And how does he invite every one that will, that they may "take of the water of life freely," that they may take it as a free gift, however precious it be, and though it be the water of life!

(2.) If you do come to Christ, he will appear as a lion in his glorious power and dominion, to defend you. All those exer-

lencies of his, in which he appears as a lion, shall be yours, and shall be employed for you in your defence, for your safety, and to promote your glory; he will be as a lion to fight against your enemies. He that touches you, or offends you, will provoke his wrath, as he that stirs up a lion. Unless your enemies can conquer this lion, they shall not be able to destroy or hurt you; unless they are stronger than he, they shall not be able to hinder your happiness. Isa. xxxi. 4. "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."

III. Let what has been said be improved to induce you to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and choose him for your friend and portion. As there is such an admirable meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ, so there is every thing in him to render him worthy of your love and choice, and to win and engage it. Whatsoever there is or can be desirable in a friend, is in Christ, and that to the highest degree that can be desired.

Would you choose for a friend a person of great dignity? It is a thing taking with men to have those for their friends who are much above them; because they look upon themselves honoured by the friendship of such. Thus, how taking would it be with an inferior maid to be the object of the dear love of some great and excellent prince. But Christ is infinitely above you, and above all the princes of the earth; for he is the King of kings.—So honourable a person as this offers himself to you, in the nearest and dearest friendship.

And would you choose to have a friend not only great but good? In Christ infinite greatness and infinite goodness meet together, and receive lustre and glory one from another. His greatness is rendered lovely by his goodness. The greater any one is without goodness, so much the greater evil; but when infinite goodness is joined with greatness, it renders it a glorious and adorable greatness. So, on the other hand, his infinite goodness receives lustre from his greatness. He that is of great understanding and ability, and is withal of a good and excellent disposition, is deservedly more esteemed than a lower and lesser being, with the same kind inclination and good will. Indeed goodness is excellent in whatever subject it be found; it is beauty and excellency itself, and renders all excellent that are possessed of it; and yet more excellent when joined with greatness. The very same excellent qualities of gold render the body in which they are inherent more precious, and of greater value, when join-

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ed with greater than when with lesser dimensions. And how glorious is the sight, to see him who is the great Creator and supreme Lord of heaven and earth, full of condescension, tender pity, and mercy, towards the mean and unworthy! His almighty power, and infinite majesty, and self-sufficiency, render his exceeding love and grace the more surprising. And how do his condescension and compassion endear his majesty, power, and dominion, and render those attributes pleasant, that would otherwise be only terrible! Would you not desire that your friend, though great and honourable, should be of such condescension and grace, and so to have the way opened to free access to him, that his exaltation above you might not hinder your free enjoyment of his friendship? And would you choose not only that the infinite greatness and majesty of your friend should be, as it were, mollified and sweetened with condescension and grace; but would you also desire to have your friend brought nearer to you? Would you choose a friend far above you, and yet as it were upon a level with you too? Though it be taking with men to have a near and dear friend of superior dignity, yet there is also an inclination in them to have their friend a sharer with them in circumstances. Thus is Christ. Though he be the great God, yet he has, as it were, brought himself down to be upon a level with you, so as to become man as you are, that he might not only be your Lord, but your brother, and that he might be the more fit to be a companion for such a worm of the dust. This is one end of Christ's taking upon him man's nature, that his people might be under advantages for a more familiar converse with him, than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow of. And upon this account the church longed for Christ's incarnation, Cant. viii. 1. "O that thou wert my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea I should not be despised." One design of God in the gospel, is to bring us to make God the object of our undivided respect, that he may engross our regard every way, that whatever natural inclination there is in our souls, he may be the centre of it; that God may be all in all. But there is an inclination in the creature, not only to the adoration of a Lord and Sovereign, but to complacence in some one as a friend, to love and delight in some one that may be conversed with as a companion. And virtue and holiness do not destroy or weaken this inclination of our nature. But so hath God contrived in the affair of our redemption, that a divine person may be the object even of this inclination of our nature. And in order hereto, such an one is come down to us, and has taken our nature, and is become one of us, and calls himself our friend, brother, and companion. Psalm cxxii. 8. "For my brethren and companions' sake, will I now say, Peace be within thee."

But is it not enough in order to invite and encourage you to free access to a friend so great and high, that he is one of infinite condescending grace, and also has taken your own nature, and is become man? But would you, further to embolden and win you, have him a man of wonderful meekness and humility? Why, such an one is Christ! He is not only become man for you, but far the meekest and most humble of all men, the greatest instance of these sweet virtues that ever was, or will be. And besides these, he has all other human excellencies in the highest perfection. These, indeed, are no proper addition to his divine excellencies. Christ has no more excellency in his person, since his incarnation, than he had before; for divine excellency is infinite, and cannot be added to. Yet his human excellencies are additional *manifestations* of his glory and excellency to us, and are additional recommendations of him to our esteem and love, who are of finite comprehension. Though his human excellencies are but communications and reflections of his divine; and though this light, as reflected, falls infinitely short of the divine fountain of light in its immediate glory, yet the reflection shines not without its proper advantages, as presented to our view and affection. The glory of Christ in the qualifications of his human nature, appears to us in excellencies that are of our own kind, and are exercised in our own way and manner; and so, in some respects, are peculiarly fitted to invite our acquaintance and draw our affection. The glory of Christ as it appears in his divinity, though far brighter, more dazzles our eyes, and exceeds the strength of our sight or our comprehension: But as it shines in the human excellencies of Christ, it is brought more to a level with our conceptions, and suitableness to our nature and manner, yet retaining a semblance of the same divine beauty, and a savour of the same divine sweetness. But as both divine and human excellencies meet together in Christ, they set off and recommend each other to us. It tends to endear the divine majesty and holiness of Christ to us, that these are attributes of one in our nature, one of us, who is become our brother, and is the meekest and humblest of men. It encourages us to look upon these divine perfections, however high and great; since we have some near concern in, and liberty freely to enjoy them. And on the other hand, how much more glorious and surprising do the meekness, the humility, obedience, resignation, and other human excellencies of Christ appear, when we consider that they are in so great a person, as the eternal Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth!

By your choosing Christ for your friend and portion, you will obtain these two infinite benefits.

1. Christ will give himself to you, with all those various excellencies that meet in him, to your full and everlasting enjoyment.

He will ever after treat you as his dear friend; and you shall ere long be where he is, and shall behold his glory, and dwell with him, in most free and intimate communion and enjoyment.

When the saints get to heaven, they shall not merely see Christ, and have to do with him as subjects and servants with a glorious and gracious Lord and Sovereign, but Christ will entertain them as friends and brethren. This we may learn from the manner of Christ's conversing with his disciples here on earth: Though he was their sovereign Lord, and did not refuse, but required, their supreme respect and adoration, yet he did not treat them as earthly sovereigns are wont to do their subjects. He did not keep them at an awful distance; but all along conversed with them with the most friendly familiarity, as a father amongst a company of children, yea, as with brethren. So he did with the twelve, and so he did with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He told his disciples, that he did not call them servants, but friends; and we read of one of them that leaned on his bosom: And doubtless he will not treat his disciples with less freedom and endearment in heaven. He will not keep them at a greater distance for his being in a state of exaltation; but he will rather take them into a state of exaltation with him. This will be the improvement Christ will make of his own glory, to make his beloved friends partakers with him, to glorify them in his glory, as he says to his Father, John xvii. 22, 23. "And the glory which thou hast given me, have I given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them," &c. We are to consider, that though Christ is greatly exalted, yet he is exalted not as a private person for himself only, but as his people's head; he is exalted in their name, and upon their account, as the first fruits, and as representing the whole harvest. He is not exalted that he may be at a greater distance from them, but that they may be exalted with him. The exaltation and honour of the head is not to make a greater distance between the head and the members; but the members have the same relation and union with the head they had before, and are honoured with the head; and instead of the distance being greater, the union shall be nearer and more perfect. When believers get to heaven, Christ will conform them to himself; as he is set down in his Father's throne, so they shall sit down with him on his throne, and shall in their measure be made like him.

When Christ was going to heaven, he comforted his disciples with the thought, that after a while he would come again and take them to himself, that they might be with him. And we are not to suppose, that when the disciples got to heaven, they found him keeping a greater distance than he used to do. No, doubtless, he embraced them as friends, and welcomed them to his and their Father's house, and to his and their glory. They who had been

his friends in this world, who had been together with him here, and had together partaken of sorrows and troubles, are now welcomed by him to rest, and to partake of glory with him. He took them and led them into his chambers, and shewed them all his glory; as he prayed, John xvii. 13. "That my joy may be fulfilled in themselves;" and set them down with him at his table in his kingdom, and made them partake with him of his dainties, according to his promise, Luke xxii. 30; and led them into his banquetting house, and made them to drink new wine with him in the kingdom of his heavenly Father; as he foretold them when he instituted the Lord's supper; Matt. xxvi. 29.

Yea, the saint's conversation with Christ in heaven shall not only be as intimate, and their access to him as free, as of the disciples on earth, but in many respects much more so; for in heaven that vital union shall be perfect, which is exceeding imperfect here. While the saints are in this world, there are great remains of sin and darkness, to separate or disunite them from Christ, which shall then all be removed. This is not a time for that full acquaintance, and those glorious manifestations of love, which Christ designs for his people hereafter; which seems to be signified by his speech to Mary Magdalene, when ready to embrace him, when she met him after his resurrection; John xx. 17. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."

When the saints shall see Christ's glory and exaltation in heaven, it will indeed possess their hearts with the greater admiration and adoring respect, but will not awe them into any separation, but will serve only to heighten their surprise and joy, when they find Christ condescending to admit them to such intimate access, and so freely and fully communicating himself to them. So that if we choose Christ for our friend and portion, we shall hereafter be so received to him, that there shall be nothing to hinder the fullest enjoyment of him, to the satisfying the utmost cravings of our souls. We may take our full swing at gratifying our spiritual appetite after these holy pleasures. Christ will then say, as in Cant. v. 1. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." And this shall be our entertainment to all eternity! There shall never be any end of this happiness, or any thing to interrupt our enjoyment of it, or in the least to molest us in it!

2. By your being united to Christ, you will have a more glorious union with, and enjoyment of God the Father, than otherwise could be. For hereby the saints' relation to God becomes much nearer; they are the children of God in a higher manner than otherwise could be. For, being members of God's own Son, they are in a sort partakers of his relation to the Father: they are not only sons of God by regeneration, but by a kind of com-

munion in the sonship of the eternal Son. This seems to be intended, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The church is the daughter of God, not only as he hath begotten her by his word and Spirit, but as she is the spouse of his eternal Son.

So we being members of the Son, are partakers in our measure of the Father's love to the Son, and complacence in him. John xvii. 23. "I in them, and thou in me,—Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." And verse 26. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." And chap. xvi. 27. "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." So we shall, according to our capacities, be partakers of the Son's enjoyment of God, and have his joy fulfilled in ourselves, John xvii. 13. And by this means we shall come to an immensely higher, more intimate, and full enjoyment of God, than otherwise could have been. For there is doubtless an infinite intimacy between the Father and the Son; which is expressed by his being in the bosom of the Father. And saints being in him, shall, in their measure and manner, partake with him in it, and of the blessedness of it.

And thus is the affair of our redemption ordered, that thereby we are brought to an immensely more exalted kind of union with God, and enjoyment of him, both the Father and the Son, than otherwise could have been. For Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a more free and full enjoyment of him, than we could have had if he had remained only in the divine nature. So again, we being united to a divine person, as his members, can have a more intimate union and intercourse with God the Father, who is only in the divine nature, than otherwise could be. Christ, who is a divine person, by taking on him our nature, descends from the infinite distance and height above us, and is brought nigh to us; whereby we have advantage for the full enjoyment of him. And, on the other hand, we, by being in Christ a divine person, do as it were ascend up to God, through the infinite distance, and have hereby advantage for the full enjoyment of him also.

This was the design of Christ, that he, and his Father, and his people might all be united in one. John xvii. 21—23. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in

them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Christ has brought it to pass, that those whom the Father has given him should be brought into the household of God; that he and his Father, and his people, should be as one society, one family; that the church should be as it were admitted into the society of the blessed Trinity.

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